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THE BALD EAGLE



ONDON: GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS.



BALD EAGLE;

OR,

THE LAST OF THE RAMAPAUGHS

Strike—till the last armed foe expires;
Strike—for your altars and your fires;
Strike—for the green graves of your sires;
God and your native land.—HALLECK.

By MRS. ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH,

AUTHOR OF "THE NEWSBOY," "BERTHA AND LILY," ETC.

LONDON:
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS.
THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE.

B A L D E A G L E.

CHAPTER I.

THE "COWBOY'S" HOME.

NEW JERSEY has often been called the Flanders of America, and it certainly earned the name by the number of battles fought upon its soil, and by the expenditure of life and money in the great war of the Revolution. Ramapo Valley suffered more than any other locality. Three years the American army encamped therein, and its fastnesses were often in the hands of the enemy or usurped by marauders, who killed and pillaged either army without principle and without mercy.

This historic and most picturesque region was at that time placed upon a bad eminence, as being the arena of the terrible exploits and cruel devastations of a class of men popularly known as the "Cowboys." These marauders belonged to neither of the parties which divided the country—they were neither patriots nor loyalists, but preyed alike upon either, as it best served their interest or malignity. The leader had been, for a long period, one Claudius Smith, a bold, handsome man, around whom secretly clustered all those unprincipled and daring men, to be found in all communities when its peace is disturbed by the presence of conflicting armies.

Smith was from a good family, which had a right to expect better things of him ; but this only goes to verify

the old proverb that every flock has one black sheep. He had a mixture of generosity, craft, cruelty, and unflinching courage in his composition which made him a hero in the eyes of that class which discards all moral questions of right and truth from the scale of judgment.

At length he was taken prisoner and hanged for his crimes ; but he left a son, Richard, a cruel, fiery youth, who swore to be revenged upon the patriots for the death of his father ; and for a long time he was the terror of the whole region ; and from his well-known characteristics had earned for himself the familiar name of Black Dick.

Our story opens in the maternal home of this graceless youth, situated under the brow of a mountain and overlooking the river.

It had been a raw, gusty day, and as the night approached the air grew sharp and caused the yellow leaves, which began to fall from the trees, to whirl and eddy round the angles of the home, like disaffected ghosts, rustling at the windows, assailing the doors, and mounting the roof.

A smouldering fire burned upon the hearth of the huge fireplace ; over the coals, suspended upon hooks from the iron crane, hung a tea-kettle, which had long since boiled, and now sent out volumes of steam, and spurted little jets of water, in angry discontent at not being “ taken off.”

On a flag-bottomed, high-backed chair, with her gown raised nearly to her knees, sat a large, low-browed woman, with her eyes fixed upon the coals ; ever and anon she swung one leg, and brought the heel of her foot down uneasily to the red-bricked hearth, as if her thought were of an oppressive or painful character. She held a short clay pipe between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, while the other fell heavily in front of her, the elbow

upon her knee. She seemed to derive little pleasure from the gratification of smoking, for she held the pipe between her lips, and occasionally drew in the air therefrom, long after the fire in the bowl had gone out. At length a drop from the sputtering kettle must have touched her, for she started quickly and cried, in a sharp voice :

“ Why don’t you take off this kettle, you lazy jade, you ?”

There was no other than the fire light in the room, which flickered and played fitfully upon the blackened rafters above, gleaming amid strings of pumpkins and apples hung to dry, and yet insufficient to illuminate the dark recesses of the apartment. Somewhere from out the gloom emerged a slender shape, with brown hair and soft, tender blue eyes, which gazed with an expression of fear upon the woman who had thus accosted somebody in the darkness. She approached timidly, and a limber wrist and small red hand lifted the obnoxious kettle from the hook, saying, at the same time.

“ Did it scald you, mother ?”

“ No ; I don’t know ; I didn’t feel it.”

“ Why, yes ; here is a blister on your hand ; let me wrap it up,” and the small red hand lifted the large brown one tenderly.

The woman shook her off, swung her leg and brought her head down with vehemence, and drew the empty, dead pipe, like one determined not to be appeased ; but the girl silently laid some cooling mixture upon the injured hand, and withdrew into the darkness.

“ Come here, Mag ; are you sniffling ?” cried the woman.

“ No, indeed, mother,” was the answer, in a soft voice, trying to be courageous, but the owner did not come forward.

There was a pause, and again a sound as if a heart had broken loose again, which was succeeded by a cough, meant to cover it up and drag it into place.

“I say come here, Mag,” cried the woman, bringing her heel down with a swing, and holding the pipe bolt upright in her hand, while she turned her head sideways in the direction of the darkness whence had issued the suspicious sound.

There was a clatter of little high-heeled shoes, and a small figure stood in the firelight, habited in a short pea-green moreen petticoat, surmounted by a white muslin loose sack, drawn in at the waist by a pink ribbon. The hair was combed up from the low, fair forehead, and fell in long tresses at the back of the head; at the left side were a few leaves and a blush rose. It was a pretty, child-like figure, to which the short dress was not unbecoming. The dark eyelashes were wet, and the lips trembled, but they smiled nevertheless, and the white throat swallowed down the lump, that would come up, resolutely.

“You are sniffing; I knew it by the sound; what ails you?”

“I—I wish Richard would come, mother. I feel dreadfully.”

“What ails you?” inquired the other, looking only at the fire.

“Somebody is sobbing and crying — crying. Oh, mother! I wish you loved me better,” and the girl knelt down and laid a hand upon the woman’s knee.

“What should I love you for?” still looking at the fire, and drawing the imaginary smoke.

“I don’t know; only I feel so dreadfully. It seems to me a little love is what the heart needs.”

"Poh, poh, Mag ! you're better off without it. Everything we love brings us misery in some way."

This time she turned her face to the girl ; there was a slight shade of feeling in her hard tone, and she added more softly,

"But what is this Maggie ? why all this bravery ?"

Maggie brought the small red hand quickly up, as if to hide the rose in her hair, and she answered timidly,

"I thought Richard would be here."

"Tut, tut, girl ; this is no time for foolery. Take it out, take it out ; all the roses are spotted with blood now."

Maggie rose to her feet, without removing the rose, and listened intently. The wind had increased to a perfect howl, and was frantically tearing the leaves from the trees. It roared in the chimney, shook the door-latch, gave a wrench at the corner of the house, and then went screaming up the mountain gorges, as if it heard some horrible tale, which could only be divulged in shrieks of horror.

The old woman—and yet she was not old in years, but old, blighted, dead in soul—listened also, but with a keen zest of enjoyment, and a smile, which was not a smile, upon her lips.

"This is grand music," she muttered.

But Maggie drew back into the darkness, and covered her face, lightly rocking with her foot a cradle.

"What, in conscience sake, do you rock that cradle for ?" cried her mother-in-law.

There was no answer, and the question was repeated. At which Maggie replied faintly,

"I think I hear every now and then poor little Dicky cry, mother."

The woman groaned, but she answered,

“He’s past that—past that.”

“I know it, mother, but it comforts me to rock the cradle.”

At this moment a furious blast shook the house, tugged at the rafters, trampled over the roof, gave a great howl down the chimney, and went shrieking up the mountain. Maggie cried :

“Hark! I am sure I heard a shriek which was not the wind.”

“Very likely,” said the other, drily.

Not long after the latch was violently shaken, and Maggie rushed to the door, and threw both arms around her husband’s neck. He returned her caresses, but absently, and took her arms from his shoulders. He crossed the room, where his mother stood with sharply-knit brows, and eyes sternly fixed.

“Well, my son?”

“It is done, mother.”

She threw both arms into the air with an expression of exultation, and then would have clasped him in her arms, had not the young man repelled her with a gesture that said, without the aid of words, “no.”

It was no wonder that the winds howled, and shrieked, and rushed to hide themselves in the mountain gorges, from whence they sent forth hollow groans, complainings, and unearthly sobs, for these solitudes had been aroused by a fearful outrage on the night we have described.

Black Dick and his fellow associates revenged that night the death of his father, and bowed, as we shall see, more than one lovely head with grief; but the old, withered heart and the dry lips which sat that night over the embers, and smoked a dead pipe, rejoiced.

A small cottage, with sloping roof upheld by vine-covered columns, stood on a little plateau, not half-a-mile from the dwelling we have described. It was a secluded, lovely spot, where the river, winding round a jutting promontory, indented a miniature bay, adown which a green lawn sloped to the pebbly beach. It was a fitting home for two young, loving hearts—brave, true, patriotic hearts, in which no dark places, no dusky, spider-web-hung chambers, gave shelter to evil thoughts or wicked designs. This was the home of young David Gurney, a devoted, loyal man, whose whole soul loathed the nefarious doings of the Cowboys, and who had been mainly instrumental in bringing Claudio Smith to punishment.

The young man, despite the troubrous times, had married one of the most beautiful girls of the valley. To this day she is talked of as the maiden loveliest of her kind, with a skin white as milk, and a cheek like the rose. But her great charm was a head of hair of such luxuriant growth that it reached to her knees, rippling like threads of gold.

He knew well that the Cowboys had doomed him to death, and he came only by stealth to the home of his beautiful bride, who lived, in the meanwhile, in the cottage, with no other companion than her mother. It is not our intention to relate the horrors of that miserable night, in which the elements themselves, used to human atrocities, shrieked as they rushed by, beholding Black Dick and his associates, aided by darkness and storm, surround the house, and having bound the two women and secured the three without firing a shot—which they dared not do for fear of giving the alarm—put the young man to death with their bayonets, in the presence of the women, he fighting desperately all the while.

The storm hid itself in the mountains all night, now and then swooping over the river, and goading its black waves to fury ; then, creeping down the cottage roof, and seizing the shutters of the window, it trembled and shook, and screamed and wailed, for there lay a human form, drenched in blood—cold, pale, stark—and a white face with blue eyes, fixed upon the dead ; and there were the golden locks bleached white, white as the whitest frost-work : they were here and there flecked with blood !

The Ramapo valley, at the time of which we write, was inhabited by the tribe of Indians known as the Rama-paughs, whose chief was designated by his title of the Bald Eagle, and who had long been the friend and confidant of the commander-in-chief of the patriot forces, George Washington. The tribe was numerous and powerful, for as yet their hunting-grounds were not impoverished, and the streams and rivers afforded them abundance of fish ; accordingly the picturesque wigwam of bark, hung with skins of the wild beast slain in the chase, was to be seen all along the banks of the river, now in groups constituting a small village, and now isolated, as best suited the convenience or whim of the owner.

On the night in question the Bald Eagle had been roused from the light slumber of the savage by one wild, unearthly shriek, which rose clear and distinct above the many voices of the storm. His quick ear instantly detected the point from whence it came, and he hastened to the scene. Listening at the door of the cottage of David Gurney, all was hushed and silent within—no light of candle or gleam of fire ; but there was that hush, that preternatural silence which follows the tumult of outrage, which is borne in upon the senses in some undefined and inexplicable way, which has a language to the inner sense

without the intervention of words. He raised the latch softly, and entered; instinctively he felt the presence of death upon the floor, and he crept to the hearth, where he was soon able to light a torch, and reveal the sad spectacle within.

The noble savage, with expert fingers, loosed the bonds of the women, and laid the lifeless head reverently, with its face upward, upon the floor. He, who had faced death and carnage so often upon the battle-field, was touched almost to tears with the sight of the cruel outrage before him, and stood with head depressed, inwardly fathoming its depth, and in the spirit of his people already resolving vengeance upon its perpetrators. Poor Dora crept to the bosom of her dead husband, and there sank to slumber, while all was silent, save the wind hurling itself along the roof, and writhing in the branches of the great forest trees.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARROW.

MAGGIE brought water and towels for her husband, who laved his face and hands long and laboriously. He was moody and silent; he called for fresh water, and again and again washed his black beard, and pressed the liquid upon his flashing eyes. The old woman had resumed her position before the fire, having first filled the brown pipe with tobacco, which she pressed down into the bowl with her little finger, her eyes fixed all the while upon the fire; she dipped the pipe amidst the embers, and began to smoke, this time with a look of enjoyment, pouring out volumes of smoke, and studying the blaze, darting itself from the pitchy wood like tongues of flame.

Maggie, pale and disappointed, withdrew into the

shadow, and soon the slight sound of the rocked cradle was heard—the cradle in which had slept her dead child, and into which she now and then peered as if fully expecting to see once more its sweet, smiling face.

At length Richard had finished his ablutions. He carefully inspected the doors and windows, drew the shutters tightly, and stuffed the curtains into every little aperture that might give out a ray of light into the dark, stormy night. He spoke only in whispers, and moved about with stealthy tread. Noticing the movement of the cradle, he frowned and waved his hand for Maggie to desist; then, seeing the poor, young, anxious face, making a light spot in the shadowy room—the only innocent, beautiful thing there—his face softened, and, seating himself upon the high-backed wooden settle by the fire, he held out his hand for Maggie to come to him.

She obeyed with a quick flush, and would have seated herself upon the settle beside him had he not taken her upon his knee. Maggie put up her lips for a kiss, but he laid her head tenderly upon his broad breast, and pressed her cheek with a slight pat of his hand, which he almost instantly withdrew, with a look of troubrous pain, unwonted to his careless ordinary expression.

“I don’t like to see you rock the cradle, Maggie,” he whispered. “What makes you do it?”

She lifted up her head and looked earnestly into his face.

“Richard, every little while I hear little Dicky cry. Wherever he is, poor little Dicky cries—and to-night I heard him scream just as he did the night he died—one long scream—”

Black Dick shuddered, and with his broad palm laid Maggie’s cheek down again upon his breast. At this

moment his mother turned her head round, and muttered :

“ Have done with your fooling, Dick. Send the girl to bed. I want to talk to you.”

Maggie clung to the neck of her husband, and with one hand softly patted his cheek, while he leaned over and whispered in a stern, forbidding manner into the ear of the woman :

“ I will not talk ! Be satisfied that it is done. You have had your will ; my tongue is my own, and I will not use it.”

“ Just like your father,” she growled, flinging the ashes from the pipe, and rising to her feet. “ Hark !

There was the sound as of the pressure of a heavy body against the door. The woman’s face assumed a ghastly, yellow paleness, and she staggered back to the wall, with her eyes riveted upon the face of her son. The latter did not move ; his face did not even change its expression. Maggie’s eyes had followed the direction of the mother’s, and she whispered, “ Are you in any danger, Richard ? ”

“ It does not matter, Maggie.”

“ Kiss me, dear Richard.”

Richard kissed her forehead with paternal tenderness. The noise at the door increased to a heavy knock.

“ It must be opened,” he whispered.

The poor young wife glanced at the stern, terrified mother, and then saw her husband step behind a heavy oaken chest, which stood in the back part of the room. This done, with trembling hands she undid the fastenings of the door.

The latch was lifted, and the Bald Eagle entered, stately and tall, his head uncovered, save his eagle crest, and his dark, fierce eyes searching the dim room as in quest of

some object, to whom it might be dangerous to encounter the warrior in his present state.

The old woman had seated herself, and resumed her pipe, affecting a coolness and indifference which she by no means felt, for she saw the black, ill-omened streaks upon the face of their visitor, together with the tomahawk, scarcely concealed by the flowing robe; and already she shrank and quivered as if the scalp were about to be torn from her head. When the stern chief crossed the room and laid a heavy hand upon her shoulder, she fell back in her chair, overcome in an agony of terror; her jaw dropped, her eyes closed, and her countenance wore the aspect of death.

Richard saw all this from his covert, but he knew Ramapaugh thoroughly, and had no fears of harm to the women. He saw likewise his wife rush forward as the Bald Eagle laid his hand upon his mother's shoulder, and seizing the hand in both of hers look up imploringly into the fiery eyes that turned fiercely upon her. Who could resist the mute appeal of that innocent one.

Maggie's lips moved, but no word followed. Again and again she strove to speak, but all in vain. She could only hold the hand of the chief in hers and look entreaty.

"Poor bird, poor bird! It pecks the snake that invades its nest."

"Go, go, I beseech you," at length cried Maggie, finding voice. "You—you will not find him here."

The Bald Eagle laid his hand upon her head; a tenderness grew into his eyes, and he replied, in grave rebuke:

"Let not the white dove soil her wings. The Bald Eagle knows he is here. Give him this."

He placed an arrow in her hand and stalked away, closing the door as he left.

Slowly the woman came out of her death-torpor, the cold sweat standing in drops upon her forehead, and her eyes glaring with that glassy, sepulchral brightness, so often the precursor of the long sleep. Richard came from his retreat, but he did not approach his mother. He fastened the door with care, and seating himself upon the settle, took his trembling little wife upon his knee. She still grasped the fatal arrow in her hand. Richard took it carelessly and tossed it aside; and, leaning his chin upon Maggie's brow, sat long absorbed in silent thought; and thus there the three silent ones sat through the long watches of the dismal night. Once Maggie started, and with a half-deprecating smile whispered in her husband's ear,

"I thought I heard poor little Dicky cry," whereat he laid her head down again very gently, and soothed her like a weary child, and waited the dawn.

At length there was a low whistle under the window.

"I must go now, Maggie," he said, taking her arms from his neck. She lifted up her pale face, and the leaves of her rose, withered and broken, fell around her.

"You will be back to-morrow, Richard," she whispered.

"Yes, Maggie."

He knew this was false; he knew that from henceforth he must lead a more precarious life than even heretofore; he knew he was safe only amid masses of men, and that his home would be watched with the tenacity of bloodhounds, but even he had not the heart to let her know the bitter truth. As he was about to leave, his mother sprang suddenly from her chair and attempted to embrace him, but the young man recoiled as from a reptile.

"You have had your will, mother; I have done your work; let that content you."

And he pressed poor Maggie one moment to his breast and was gone. She stood looking into the void he had filled—he who was her world, and without whom life was empty space—long after the door closed upon him. At length she turned to her companion and asked, like one determined to speak in spite of her fears,

“Mother, what is the danger to Richard? What do you fear?”

“Go to bed, baby; you are no more of a woman than a child of ten; go to bed, baby.

“I can’t sleep, mother.”

“Hold your tongue, then.”

“Mother, is Richard a bad man? Has he done anything wrong?”

“Yes, he is bad—the worst kind of a man.”

And she rose furiously to her feet, and stalked up and down the room, muttering,

“I, his mother, to say it?”

Poor Maggie staggered to the cradle, which she began to rock, saying doubtfully,

“If he is bad, that is why poor little Dicky cries so.”

The guilty woman, driven frantic at the sight of so much patience and innocence, seized her by the wrist, and put her out of the room, saying,

“Go to bed, you jade; you drive me mad.”

CHAPTER III.

THE MESSENGER.

WE must give a glance at the country, embracing the period in which our story dates, in order to show the bearing of public events upon the individuals of our history.

It was near the close of our revolutionary struggle, that long, protracted, earnest endeavour in which a handful of patriots had strenuously and with varied success confronted the colossal power of Great Britain. The battle of Lexington had been echoed and re-echoed from North to South. Each and every state had been watered with the blood of the patriot; sacred and holy were the drops which baptized the land to eternal freedom; the ashes of cities—little ones, it is true, but hereafter to shake the earth like Lebanon—the ashes of towns and villages had ascended to the face of heaven to call down the day of retribution. A needy, ill-equipped, and ill-disciplined army—an army of boys, indeed, for it was well known that every true patriot sent forth his household cheerfully to the contest, and striplings of sixteen and eighteen crowded the ranks—had made themselves heard in many a hard-contested field. Bunker Hill and Bennington, Saratoga, Trenton, and Camden were but the higher points in the mounds of our battle-fields, and now it remained to strike the final blow which should decide at once the fate of the country.

The summer of 1781 opened with a better prospect of success to the cause of human freedom than even its most enthusiastic supporters had dared to anticipate.

The campaign of the Southern Army under Green had been on the whole favourable to our cause, and, though

Fabian in the greater part of its movements, had not failed to give evidence of power. The allied French forces were ready to co-operate wherever the wisdom of Washington should direct ; and it remained for him to decide whether his movements should threaten Sir Henry Clinton in his position at New York, or be directed against the vaunting Cornwallis, who had stationed himself at the two points of Yorktown and Gloucester. The stress of the times, the evident crisis of events which now became apparent, rendered the greatest circumspection requisite, as the least false step might plunge the army into disaster and ruin.

The calm mind of Washington took in all with its rare comprehensiveness, and came to results at once wise and for the general good. Hitherto his movements had been such as to lead Sir Henry Clinton to suppose that New York would be the unquestioned point of attack ; and the impression had been given to the patriot army, so that the taking of New York had become the familiar gossip of the camp.

Though his head-quarters were further up the country, he not unfrequently appeared in the little valley of Ramapo, the better to assure the inhabitants, and to take those points of observation essential to a military leader.

The highest mountain-peak of the Highlands of the Hudson, in the vicinity of which we write, was called the Thor, or king mountain, so named by the German settlers. From the top of the Thor, New York bay and harbour may be plainly descried, a distance of thirty miles. Often of a morning the stately form of Washington might be seen standing here, like some fabulous demigod, reconnoitring the country. It was his favourite place of observation.

Anxious as was the period of which we are treating, it was, as we have said, full of hope. The revolt of the Pennsylvania militia at Morristown, and the subsequent mutinous rising of the Jersey corps, while they for a moment spread dismay through the country, and increased the already overwhelming burdens of the commander-in-chief, had yet a bright side, and served to develop the noble materials of which the army was composed.

These mutinous men, ragged and starving as they were, were staunch patriots to the core. Though importuned with the most flattering offers of pardon and emolument from the British, their liberty and exemption from military service fully guaranteed, not only did they reject such proposals, but delivered the emissaries of Sir Henry Clinton up to the commander, to be dealt with according to the usages of war. They loved the cause and the country none the less, but, goaded by suffering, had resolved to start Congress from its lukewarmness.

Severe as was the trial to the country at large, the individual trial was most heavily felt by Washington himself. He saw that another such winter would sink the hopes of the country. Added to these emergencies, the aid of the French naval power had been far from efficient and salutary. There certainly had been too much disposition to independent action ; a latent feeling of vanity prompting to single trials of prowess between English and French arms, rather than combined and concentrated co-operation with the tactics of the patriot army. Washington felt all this, and by the most strenuous efforts and the most skilful reasoning counteracted the evil. He laboured day and night, vigilant for every department of interest, and sustaining a correspondence, wonderful alike for its voluminousness and ability.

He had now concerted a plan of operations remarkable for wisdom and completeness, the features of which demanded the utmost powers of concealment on the part of all entrusted with the details; a concealment so well sustained that to this day the whole matter is shrouded in mystery, and, now that we are able to look back to its entire success, we are compelled to regard the whole as superhuman—that something beyond mere human skill and forethought were requisite to bring about measures embracing so many contingencies, the favourable action of so many agents considered fortuitous, and the exact subordination of so many parts to the whole. Such were the features of the events preceding the attack of the allied armies upon Cornwallis at Yorktown.

At this time Washington and his staff occupied a low stone building in the village of Newburgh, a spot venerated yet as the head-quarters of the commander-in-chief. A place so sacred should be the Mecca of the region, where young and old should repair to reillumine the ashes of patriotism or to enkindle its fire. Here, before a plain walnut table, covered with diagrams and despatches, sat the great man, late at night, maturing the plans of the coming eventful campaign. Absorbed and anxious as he was, there was a singular repose upon the fine features as they were bent over his task. An iron lamp, suspended from the ceiling, cast the light upon the top of the head, revealing its most classical and harmonious proportions, the hair slightly thinned about the temples, and flecked with the touches of frost. As the light stole downward, leaving a halo upon the scarcely contracted and noble brow, it showed the thoughtful depth of the clear, almost melancholy, eye, and left the strongly-compressed lips nearly in shadow.

As he perused a paper his hand instinctively grasped his chin, not with a philosophic touch, as we have seen in pictures of Franklin, but with a firm grasp, the fingers spread upon the side of the cheek and throat, an attitude which indicated, not only firmness of general character, but a concentration of purpose for the present contingency.

He had just received despatches from General Lee, by way of Morristown, where a portion of the Northern Army was located, by which he learned that Sir Henry Clinton, anticipating an attack of the allied arms upon the city of New York, had withdrawn a part of the forces of Cornwallis at Yorktown—this, too, at a time when the army of General Greene was making its way to the north. Washington saw at once the importance of a change of operations, and resolved to concentrate all the force of the allied arms against Lord Cornwallis, leaving Sir Henry Clinton unmolested in the city of New York, conceiving that a bold and successful campaign in Virginia would decide the fate of the war, with less waste of blood, and less hazard to the cause, than an attack against Sir Henry. In order to do this it was essential to leave the impression still upon the mind of the latter that the movements of the army were designed against himself. He was now busy in preparing despatches to the various points of the American Army, demanding their co-operation, as also to the commander of the French Fleet, directing him to repair to the Chesapeake.

The inmates of the house were buried in slumber, except the personal friend and aide of Washington, the accomplished Hamilton, who walked back and forth under the piazza, waiting till the labours of the great man should cease. As he thus moved, occasionally emerging into the

moonlight, and looking out upon the broad waters of the Hudson, heaving up silver wavelets to the night, he looked less like the counsellor of a statesman and soldier than a young cavalier, whose gallant bearing betrayed the dreams of ambition, and whose silken curls and intellectual head told that, whether in lady's bower, or tented field, or stirring forum, the proudest of those dreams might well be realised.

A slight signal from within called him to the side of the commander-in-chief.

“Hamilton, I see nothing wanting to our entire success but one further step to ensure the delusion of Clinton, and which may induce him to withdraw the fleet from the Chesapeake.”

“True,” returned the other; “an intercepted messenger will do this.”

“That is the point. Can we procure one trusty and willing?”

Hamilton shrugged his shoulders. “We have trusty men in abundance, dear General, but a solitary man to risk the certain hazard of a score of bullets requires peculiar mettle.”

Washington’s hand had been for some moments pressed over his lips, so that the expression there could not be detected; but the fine open countenance of Hamilton betrayed a pang, which might have been a foretaste of his subsequent doom. He leaned his head upon the table, and, sinking his forehead into the palm of his hand, both were a moment silent.

“It must be done, Hamilton,” said Washington, in a low voice.

“I have been thinking of one, a noble fellow, crossed in love, too, which will make him indifferent to the future,

at least for a while. It isn't necessary to tell him more than that he is to take papers a certain route to a certain destination."

This time Washington's features contracted sharply, and his face assumed that rigid aspect we so often see in drawings of him.

"It is the necessity of war, Hamilton ; every man must take his life in his hands in times like these."

"I am thinking Montagnie is just the man. You may have seen him with me, General—a fine, handsome youth ; bold as a lion, and versatile as a Frenchman. He is of Huguenot blood, as you see by his name. Montagnie has taken the wrong side in this war ; so believes his Tory mistress, and the two have quarrelled in consequence. I am confident her lover is ready to undertake the most desperate enterprise."

"It is necessary to use dispatch—by to-morrow we must be on the move."

"I make no doubt Montagnie is awake now ; there is nothing so wakeful as your discomfited lover. I will send for him directly—and it may be we shall do a double service—one to the country first, and, secondly, awake his freakish lady to a sense of what she is in a fair train of losing."

Hamilton spoke lightly, but the estimation in which he held Wendell Montagnie showed conclusively that the best spirit, both for man and country, lurked beneath.

A short time served to usher the young man into the presence of Washington. He was a mere youth, with an oval face, as yet ungraced by a beard, and brown wavy hair clustering abundantly about his high but somewhat narrow forehead. Brows as fairly defined as those of a girl overlooked a full grey eye, which appeared black in

the shadow of its long curved lashes. A nose slightly aquiline gave an appearance of spirit to a face which otherwise might have seemed too gentle. He was tall and lightly made, with an air at once proud yet respectful.

Washington regarded the youth with an evident look of surprised admiration, and then glanced almost reproachfully at Hamilton, as if he would say, "The sacrifice is too great." It may be that the shadow of the unfortunate Andre, so justly but painfully doomed, flitted before his mind's eye. Whatever it might have been, he stayed to affix his signature to a document, which he did, and then pushed the paper aside. Looking stedfastly in the face of the youth, he began :

"It is no ordinary man that must serve us on this occasion."

Montagnie started with something like impatience, and answered with a boldness and promptitude which carried its own charm :

"General, we all love and reverence you ; there is not one in the ranks who is not ready to lay down his life, first for his country, next for your excellency ; but, to save time, I must declare I, for one, can go on no service that will cast a stain upon my good name."

Washington gave a gesture of impatience.

"Young man, I honour your sentiments. In ordinary times they are all that is essential ; but now we need men who can forget all—forget self, kindred, and friends for country."

Turning to Hamilton, he continued, "Time wears, can you divine nothing further ?"

Hamilton touched the shoulder of Montagnie, and they turned to the window, while Washington followed them

with his eyes, his face assuming an expression of intense melancholy ; both were eminently beautiful—both in the flush of youth, and as they stood in the pale light of the moon, there was something still and unearthly in their sharp outlines, as if “ coming events cast their shadows before,” and invested each with a strange interest.

Hamilton would have spoken, but Montagnie leaned his shoulder against the window frame, and with a faint smile broke the silence :

“ Say nothing, my friend. Washington has made the only available plea. Let me have ten minutes for thought. Call me when they are past.”

Obeying the first warm impulses of his generous nature, Hamilton threw his arms around the devoted youth, and whispered :

“ God bless you, Montagnie.”

The young man stepped out upon the piazza, where, leaning his back to the wall, he firmly clasped his arms to his breast, and his eyes peered into the distance without being fixed by any one object. It would be difficult to follow the train of thought as image after image arose to his mind. The gesture of Hamilton had disposed him to a degree of tenderness, and the first gushings of emotion went forth to his mistress. True, she was capricious, scornful, and petulant, but when did ever love ask counsel of wisdom ? Many were the discreet, comely, appreciating maidens of the neighbourhood, but they lacked the undefined graces of Katrina de Witt, who queened it over her admirers with an easy assurance that kept up a perpetual rivalry amongst the youth of the village. Notwithstanding this, she honoured Wendell Montagnie with such an exuberance of freakishness, wit, and smiles, that all regarded him as the favoured lover.

True, that very day she had spoken scornfully, even harshly, if a voice so sweet and lips so fair could be thus disposed. She had stigmatized the cause so dear to the heart of Montagnie as “rebellious, treasonable, and insane”—more than this, they, the supporters thereof—they, the half-clad and half-starved army, who had left the peace and comforts of home to march and counter-march before a nobly equipped foe—aye, die and be forgotten, leaving only the result of the conflict to brighten the hereafter—men like these Katrina had stigmatized as a “ridiculous rabble,” “a host of ragamuffins,” who must soon grace the gibbet in return for their folly.

Montagnie thought of these things bitterly; and his love waned when he recalled the scornful curve of her pretty lip, and the flashing of her bright eye, coupled with words like these. He remembered that she had intimated that more than one British officer (who had found the way to the house of her Tory father) had spoken of himself with approval, and that wealth and promotion might both be his by a change of service. He felt no temptation here, rather a bitter scorn for himself that any thing should lurk about him by which another should dare couple him with so base a thought. No, insignificant as he might be, he was all freedom’s; doubly so when peril and shame were heaped upon her cause—doubly so when his own hopes were baffled.

Then appeared the image of Katrina as she had sometimes appeared, gentle, winning, and most womanly, and his mood softened. “She is worth the winning,” he said to himself; “but I must not through her learn to despise myself.”

Suddenly the thought of his mission flashed like a pang through his nerves. He was yet unaware of its precise

import ; he had only learned that some one superior to the ordinary soldier was necessary to sacrifice somewhat for the public good. Then came the images of Nathan Hale, of Hayne, of Andre, and others whose deaths had been such that the mothers that bore them might well shriek aghast, as if the shame of the mode might leave its blighting shame upon the soul, and for ever blend it with their memories. True, these were ennobled by the act which cast a temporary degradation about them—the fatal tree was to them the cross by which they had elevated the sentiment of patriotism to a sublimity second only to the greater one of religion ; yet there stood the martyr men before him—scoffed, dishonoured, helpless, strong only for the land to which each owed his allegiance.

A cold sweat started to his pores, and his arms fell to his side at the greatness of the sacrifice, nor was even he aware how the kindling embers of love of country were burning within him as these fell images floated before him. Had not a price been set upon the head of Washington himself? Did not all the leaders of the Revolution act with this terrible alternative before them ? Capture or defeat, the failure of the cause, and the stout men who made up the Congress of the people—Washington himself, the great, the revered—would each and all hang from the gallows-tree, as the bones of Coligny, Cromwell, and others of the truly great have done before them, making that hallowed which was designed for a type of shame.

As thus he stood he was roused by the exclamation of Hamilton, who had approached unperceived : “ My God, this must not be,” escaped from his lips as he marked the deadly paleness of his friend.

Montagnie was instantly aroused, “ I have decided,” he said. laying his hand in that of Hamilton, and they

entered the presence of Washington. Here each seated himself silently before the table. At length Montagnie broke the silence by saying, "I am ready for whatever you may require."

"To-morrow," replied Washington, and his voice, though even in its firm tones, had a touch of huskiness unwonted to him, "I shall have a series of papers in readiness, which I desire to transmit to General Lee, by the way of Morristown."

Montagnie looked up with a smile of surprise, as if the torturing ordeal which he had just passed in his own mind had been a weak and childish waste of power, and he simply asked, "Am I to know the nature of these despatches."

Washington's eyes were fixed upon the papers before him, as he replied,

"They contain details of the anticipated attack of the allied armies upon the City of New York."

Montagnie threw himself back in his chair with the air of one overwhelmed with a sense of intense self-disgust, and which for a moment bore down all other considerations.

"This is a mere boy's task, your excellency; I had foolishly nerved myself for a great sacrifice."

"You will secure these papers carefully about your person, descend the Hudson in the rear of the mountains, leaving them upon your left, you will follow the gorge of the Highlands through the Cleave of the Ramapo, ordering your time so that you will do this before daybreak."

While Washington spoke this slowly and distinctly, Montagnie arose to his feet, amazed at what he heard.

"The pass is in the hands of the enemy!" he at length ejaculated.

Washington had resumed his pen, and seemed unconscious of the presence of the speaker, while Montagnie stood as if plunged in reverie, with his eyes fixed upon the unchanging aspect of Washington ; but no vague and dreamy reverie wasted the faculties of Wendell Montagnie, as he thus stood ; they were all keenly alive, disentangling the maze of thought spread out before him. Strange and bewildering surmises crowded upon him as to the motives of the commander-in-chief. What could they be ? Was he—the noble, the true, the devoted, after all—? No, no, the ingenuous blush of youth mantled his cheek, as the startling and unworthy thought darted across his mind ; yet why expose his measures to the hazard of being known to the foe ? The route prescribed was unusual, circuitous, and the Pass of the Ramapo in the hands of the enemy. Why not take the back road further to the north, which had been constructed expressly for the use of the troops, in order to keep the communication open between West Point and the Jerseys ? Unable to solve the enigma, he was still resolved to act. At length a bright flush cast itself over his face, and a sad smile played with it as he broke the painful silence.

“ I must double the ramparts of the enemy, take any quantities of winged lead, and be deprived of my papers.”

Washington raised his head impatiently, and answered in a deep stern voice, at the same time bringing down his foot with a heavy stamp upon the floor, “ Young man, your duty is to act, not to talk.”

This stamp of the foot is better than any parade of words as revealing the internal fibre of the man Washington.

Montagnie bowed coldly, but, turning to Hamilton, he said :

“ I shall be accounted a miserable dupe, a braggart fool ; be it so, one might choose a more chivalric and better understood aspect of adventure, but it is a trifle to be ridiculous for the public good.”

The bitterness of this trifling struck to the heart of Hamilton, and he ventured a few low remarks to the commander-in-chief ; but, whatever might have been his suggestion, Washington shook his head, and continued bent over his papers in a manner that showed, however much he might rely upon the clearness and depth of apprehension of his young friend in ordinary cases, where an emergency demanded simply firmness of purpose, involving few conflicting elements, he relied solely upon his own judgment. Waving his hand in a manner that showed the conference was, for the present, at an end, he sat absorbed in his great plans long after those who had shared his counsel had retired to rest.

CHAPTER IV

THE SAVAGE'S GUEST.

WE must now retrace our steps, and consider the position of other personages essential to our story, for, indeed, we are far in advance of incidents and characters which must be the groundwork of the events associated with the crisis in the history of the nation. Ramapaugh was, at the period of our story, in the full flush of early youth, with the fierce instincts of the savage glowing and burning in a form as lithe and beautiful as that of the young Apollo.

He had allied himself to the interests of the colonies,

and was not unfrequently employed by Washington upon missions of importance, and by whom he was esteemed also as a true and unfailing guide. Ramapaugh waged a ceaseless and deadly war against the Cowboys, whose atrocities would have been even greater than they were but for the vigilance of the heroic savage. Strange as it may seem, a rude and not unadmir ing companionship existed between Ramapaugh and young Richard Smith, or Black Dick, as we have seen, the leader of the Cowboys, who, though so often encountering each other in deadly hostility, had each found in the other a foeman so worthy of his steel, that a sort of amiable delight in the prowess of the other had grown into the minds of each, and they had been known, after some fierce combat, each to call off their followers, and the two men descend together the banks of the river, and there, side by side, with jeer and jest, wash from their persons the sanguinary stains of battle.

More than once the war-plume of Ramapaugh had been shot away in some solitary mountain-pass, when even the keen instincts of the savage could detect no indications of the presence of a foe, and Richard Smith as often had felt the bullet or the arrow graze his ear, severing away the black curls that clustered above his black fiery eyes. These were but pastimes to men familiar with blood, who held their lives lightly as the wind that stirred the old woods over their heads.

All this tolerance on the part of the Bald Eagle of a cruel man on account of his courage ceased from the time of the atrocious murder of the unhappy David Gurney. Inasmuch as Black Dick had seen fit to revenge the death of his father, by taking the life of Gurney, his taking off did not conflict with his savage sense of retri-

bution ; but it was the method of revenge which filled his primitive soul with disgust and horror. David Gurney was a brave man, worthy to be met, foot to foot, by the bravest warrior of any people. He had a right to die in the presence of brave men, under the overhanging heavens, with a chance for his life. It was infamous to be butchered in the presence only of "squaws" (women) at midnight, and with the odds of ten to one.

With views like these the Bald Eagle in his turn had determined to strike home to the heart of Black Dick that night upon his own hearthstone, and send him howling to the spirit-land in revenge for the death of Gurney. Such had been his design when he traced him home ; such his determination when he placed the black omen upon his brow, and went, tomahawk in hand, the avenger of blood. Dick should die as Gurney did, in the presence of squaws only, and they should share the agony of Dora Gurney ; but the pleading child-face of poor Maggie prevailed ; he left the gage of honourable battle behind, as we have seen, and departed.

More than this, when he seized the shoulder of the old woman, it was with all the fierce instincts of the savage in full action, and his fingers itched to play amid the scanty grey hairs of the scalp-lock, for he knew well the cruel greedy spirit of their owner ; he knew well that the worst passions of Claudio Smith and his son had been stimulated into power by the fireside counsels of an evil woman ; but Maggie prevailed. The white dove couching amid vultures was a sight to touch the hardest heart, and he went his way, leaving Black Dick to a future reckoning.

The outrage upon David Gurney, and the great change wrought in the person of the beautiful Dora by the

horrors of that fearful night, produced a profound impression at the time, not only upon the inmates of the valley, but extended itself to a wide district, increasing the existing hostility prevailing against the Cowboys ten-fold. More than one party had secretly approached the dwelling of "old Mother Smith," as she was called, determined to wreak summary vengeance upon its inmates, but the sight of Maggie's sweet pale face, her innocent ignorance of the evil atmosphere in which she lived, her tender patient duty to the cross and malignant old woman, were so touching, that the stoutest heart yielded to her sweet influence, and went his way vanquished—the lion yielding to the lamb—and the house was left unmolested.

The mother of David Gurney survived her son but a few days; and then Dora was left alone, for the stress of war had not only scattered families, but so many had fled to New York and even to Europe, so many had perished also in battle, that feeble women and helpless children were often entirely thrown upon the aid of strangers for protection and the means of preserving life. The brief obsequies of mother and son were soon over, and in a little space poor Dora and her misfortunes ceased to engage interest amongst families, each of whom had their own cares.

When Bald Eagle, as we have seen, had cut the bonds that had tortured her, Dora dropt into a heavy slumber, a slumber so deep that it seemed more like death than nature's sweet restorer. She never knew how tenderly the noble savage unclasped her white arms, and lifted her, like a lily, broken and crushed, and laid her upon the bed, and how, day by day, he prepared the simple food that kept death from claiming his prey.

She would open her large blue eyes, and fix them with an anxious scrutiny upon his face ; with pale hands holding back her long snowy hair from her forehead, and with wistful eagerness strive to recall those painful memories, which, like flitting phantoms, eluded her grasp ; then the noble savage laid her poor head softly back upon the pillow, and, stroking her forehead, soothed her to forgetfulness.

Thus weeks and months passed away, and time, which had brought back health to the cheek of Dora, failed to restore to her the bright fancies and lucid thoughts that had once made her like the vision of a poet's dream, an embodiment of grace, intellect, and beauty. She was tender and docile, and a stranger might never have supposed she had ever been other than what she now appeared.

Thus, in the stress of the times, the inhabitants of the region removed to the mountains or to the more thickly-settled parts of the country. Many had sought the protection of one or the other of the contending armies, leaving Dora, as we have seen, in her ruined home, guarded by the faithful Ramapaugh.

Nearly a year passed away, and now health had returned, but no roses ever again bloomed upon the face of Dora Gurney,

“ Her cheek ! oh, call it fair, not pale ! ”

was colourless as marble, and an unearthly brightness of the eyes, coupled with the affluent hair, which rippled in snowy folds to her knee, gave her the appearance of some denizen of supernal spheres, rather than an inhabitant of earth.

It was the early spring. A few blossoms began to

dapple the green earth. The bluebird and robin were jubilant amid the tasselated foliage of the trees; the lizard peered from amid the brown mosses; the pale ferns curled upwards from the earth, and a thousand mountain rills filled the valley with their melody. Dora had seated herself upon a shelf of granite, overlooking a small cascade, which, falling a few feet above her head, descended into a basin, worn smooth as polished stone at her feet. She had unbraided her hair, which the wind, seizing in its breath, spread abroad like a veil of gossamer, and she might have been mistaken for some lovely Undine, engaged in adjusting her snowy mantle.

As is not unfrequently the case with persons in whom the healthful poise of the mind has been destroyed, she had an intolerance of confinement of any kind, and passed nearly all her time climbing mountains or in roaming the forest. She knew no fatigue, felt no cold, and every aspect of nature brought to her its own peculiar charms. The denizens of the wood grew familiar with her face, and even affiliated with her in gentle companionship. It would seem as if a certain power had grown upon her in this respect, that, just in proportion as she had lost that clearness of mind which would have rendered her the companion of her kind, she had grown nearer to the unreasoning, instinctive representatives of creation, amongst whom she had established a familiar intercourse.

Dora sat this balmy day in one of her favourite haunts, her violet eyes detecting, with eager delight, the smallest insect no less than the flitting bird, her lips chanting wild incoherent melodies, which blended with waterfall, and wind, and bird, and insect-voice in perfect harmony.

The warm sun glinted through the foliage, there was a

soft rustle of the dead leaves, and a huge black snake glided to the basin, slaking its thirst. Dora eyed the reptile with a pleased rather than terrified look, and when he lifted his head, fixed her bright violet eye upon him in a manner that arrested his flight. Slowly he raised himself fold above fold, till his glittering eye was level with her own, and the girl still fixed his gaze, waving her small pale hand from side to side, he all the time vibrating his head in unison. Suddenly, with a convulsive movement, he stretched himself at length upon the rock at her feet, and his head fell upon her lap. Patting the monster softly, she half rose from her seat, and he lay motionless and dead.

Dora took no further notice of the creature, but sat with her chin resting upon her hand, unconscious of a pair of black eyes that were peering upon her from a neighbouring thicket. At length a slender youth stood before her, rifle in hand, and, pointing to the dead reptile, said,

“That was well done, but how?”

Dora fixed her gaze upon him, but did not reply.

“Are you a live woman, or spirit?” again inquired the youth, uneasily, for the clear violet eyes never turned their glance from his, fixing him as by a spell. He approached slowly, his body bent with an expression of awe, and slightly laid a finger upon her arm, which seemed to reassure him, for he exclaimed,

“Warm flesh and blood, by George!”

And hardly had the words passed his lips before a bullet grazed his cheek and clipt a sapling at his side.

“Come on, Ramapaugh; nobody wants to hurt the white witch.”

It was Black Dick, who had not seen Dora since that

fatal night, and who failed to recognize her in her altered aspect."

All this time Dora had not moved her eyes, but her brow grew troubled, and she gathered her hair back to her head, as if it might aid in collecting her scattered senses. Suddenly a flash of memory returned, and she sprang, tiger-like, but uttering not a word. Richard Smith recoiled from the white fury, and, seizing both her hands, would have dashed her to the earth had not the strong arms of Ramapaugh prevented.

"Blood enough of hers is on the hands of the white man," he said, as he thrust him aside.

"I took her for one of those imps that people talk about; a witch, whose cantrips turn the marrow of a man's bones to jelly."

"You struck the White Doe to the heart, Dick; but nothing shall harm her while Ramapaugh can fire a shot."

"I remember the white witch, and I owe this ugly scar to the kindness of that fiery husband of hers. I have a scot to settle yet."

And he brought from an inner pocket the arrow of the Bald Eagle.

The warrior looked admiringly at the audacious youth, and a glow of savage enthusiasm lighted his face.

"Come on," continued Black Dick, "we may as well have it out now as any time."

The chief waved his hand.

"My token will keep. Put it up. Be sure the Bald Eagle will redeem it."

"When you will," returned the other, and, resting his rifle in the hollow of his arm, he departed.

From the time of this interview among the hills Dora

became even more than ordinarily restless—she slept little, and a fevered desire for change took the place of that dreamy indolence which hitherto had marked her secluded wanderings. Not less taciturn than before, she seemed like one who had lost a treasure, which he sought in vain to recover. Day and night she wandered about the silent valley climbing the highest peaks, and outwatching the stars in solitary vigils; starting the owl from his nocturnal retreat, or scaring the fox from his prey. She was devoid of all fear herself, though her tall form, defined at midnight against the sky from some crag, with her white hair streaming about her, struck terror into the heart of many an observer; and more than once the marauding Cowboys had turned back from their work of devastation, terrified at beholding a spectral form, motionless and white in the moonlight, occupying the “Devil’s Pulpit.”

We ought here to describe a feature of the valley so intimately associated with the history of the times, most especially with the career of the Cowboys. The reader must imagine a high mountain-side rising nearly perpendicularly from the bed of the river, lined at the marge by a ridge of green trees which barely found a foothold, while here and there stunted birches and shrubs emerged from the crevices of the rocks, and cast the river into deep shadow below.

Half-way up this bald mountain-side was a projecting rock, rounding like a table from its surface. The upper edge would sustain a man with ease, who had only to draw together the low trees upon either side to be perfectly screened from observation. This point commanded a view of the road above and below. No object would escape the observation of the sentry there sta-

tioned. It was as perfect a loop-hole as if it had been purposely built into the bastion of a rampart for that very purpose.

This was the place so well known in local history as the "Devil's Pulpit."

Here Claudio Smith used to place his scouts in ambush, with preconcerted signals, and, having mounted to this table rock, would reconnoitre the valley, and many a brave man was picked off who wandered through the valley, totally unconscious of the terrible fate awaiting him. Detachments of men were picked off by shot after shot from unknown assailants. Cattle disappeared, and youths and maidens were waylaid and dragged into terrible bondage by these unscrupulous marauders, who demanded large sums for their liberation.

The wanderings of Dora Gurney at length became so wide and uncertain that the kind-hearted savage saw that at some time evil would come of it. Participating in the well-known superstition of his people, that he who is stricken in his reason has especial revelations from the Master of Life, and is the object of his especial care, he looked upon her not only with forbearing tenderness, but with solemn respect and awe.

The wigwam of Ramapaugh was built upon a prominence screened by lofty trees, festooned from branch to branch by the wild grape and woodbine, which had constructed an arcade of rare loveliness and picturesque effect. It commanded a long reach of valley prospect, and every object along the Cleave was at once revealed to the eye of its inmates, while such was the denseness of the overhanging shrubbery that the bark walls of the dwelling were entirely screened from view.

At the base of the promontory flowed the pellucid

waters of the Ramapo—a slight indenture of which gave a safe lodgment to the nets and snares of the chief, and held the birch canoe, safely moored amid the coarse grass at the margin.

To this sylvan abode Ramapaugh at length conveyed Dora Gurney. Lifting the skin which screened the portal, the chief bent his stately head and entered, motioning Dora to follow.

They were encountered by a young girl, who gave a quick bright glance at Ramapaugh, and then stood in an attitude of pleased but submissive affection, a soft smile just parting the coral of her lips, and a rich glow mounting upon her cheek. She was habited in a demi-civilised dress, the wampum belt of which showed the lithe waist and swelling bust to great advantage, while her long braids of jetty hair were crowned and tufted with strings of ruby berries of the winter-green.

“I am come, Mequa” (Squirrel), said the chief, softly.

“Light to the blossom, music to the shell,” murmured the girl, but she did not approach him, nor raise her eyes to his face.

Ramapaugh turned to Dora, and said, with a tone of gentle authority,

“Take the White Doe to her covert; she has been wounded by the hunters.”

The eyes of the young savage flashed fire beneath their long lashes. She glanced sideways at the white girl, but neither moved nor spoke.

Ramapaugh approached her, and, with brows sharply knit, said, in a voice deep, low, and yet firmly tender,

“Does Mequa raise the rafters of the wigwam? Doe she hunt the deer, or spear the salmon? Does she follow the trail of the warrior?

The mutinous look of the girl gave place to one of inexpressible softness. She glanced proudly at the handsome face bending over her, and then, taking the hand of Dora, led her to a pile of skins, and began to braid the tangled locks of her head. Submissive was she, but a troubled light lurked in the eye, and more than once a moisture gathered upon her lids. Soothed by these unwonted feminine attentions, Dora rested her head upon the skins, and soon fell into a profound sleep.

In the meanwhile Ramapaugh hung venison upon the wall and brought fish from the canoe. Seating himself upon a mat, he beckoned Mequa to his side. Blushing with affection and delight, the girl reclined at his feet, and awaited what he should say in silence.

“The great chief, Washington, holds a council, and calls for the Bald Eagle—he will be back before the moon has filled her horn.”

“And Mequa ?” she asked, imploringly.

“Will bind plantain upon the worn feet of the White Doe.”

A slight twist of the shoulders indicated discontent upon the part of Mequa, but she was silent, and then was about to rise when the chief motioned her back.

There was a pleased smile upon his lip, as he placed a finger beneath her chin and raised the face upward.

“Does Mequa fear a rival in the wigwam of Ramapaugh ?”

The young savage gave a quick start, and a hurried, glowing look into the face of her husband ; then she bent her eyes and ran a slender finger along the shells of her girdle till they gave out a rattling melody ; and then she shook her head, with a smile brightening the whole face.

“The White Doe has been hunted and wounded ; she talks with the Great Spirit ; the winter-frost has killed the

blossoms in her heart—and she forgets that the rose and violet have ever bloomed," continued the chief.

Mequa looked in the direction of the sleeper, and the chief saw that she was appeased; rising, the two went out, and stood together upon the bank. The twilight had yielded to the shadowy light of stars, and the crescent moon, fair as a celestial barque lowered from some heavenly sphere, to ferry the disembodied to the island of the blest, hung a silver thread in the west.

A low, quivering cry, like that of the loon, broke the stillness, and at the signal the young wife glided beside the chief down to the pebbly beach, and helped to launch the light canoe. As it glided from the strand, a coronal of vine was flung over her shoulders, which Mequa seized with delight, for it was a token of the adoration of her husband, and long did she stand watching the slender barque as it danced in the dim light, its pathway marked by a wake of silver.

At length the canoe became invisible, and she returned to the cabin. Dora was awake, half reclining upon her elbow, and the Indian girl, having lighted fresh torches upon the hearth, seated herself at her side, and began gently to unlace the shoes from her feet.

"Where is Ramapaugh?" asked Dora, abruptly.

"Gone to the council-fire. What would the White Doe ask of Ramapaugh?"

Dora gazed intently at the speaker; it was evident that in her imperfect reason she claimed a right to dictate in regard to the chief, and looked upon this questioning with resentment. She made no reply, and Mequa repeated her question.

"I will tell the Bald Eagle when he comes," she answered, dryly.

The Indian girl continued her gentle ministrations for the comfort of the other, and then asked,

“ Is the White Doe afraid ? ”

“ A hare crossed our path, and that you know betokens danger.”

“ Truly ; but the Bald Eagle is brave ; he knows no fear ; danger flees before him. He is wise as the beaver and bold as the panther.

Her cheek glowed brightly with the pride of her happy love, as she recounted the perfections of her husband.

Dora’s brow contracted sharply, and she held her hand upon her temple, as if striving to collect her thoughts ; then she looked down upon the bright face of Mequa, and with her two hands held it up and studied it intently. The girl, laughing, tried to withdraw it, but Dora, with solemn scrutiny, held her firm. The smile died away, and Mequa slept ; then Dora bent over her, patting her shoulder and crooning an old song in a low voice. There was no sound but the lap of the water over the pebbles, and the soft whispering of the pines. Suddenly the screech of the owl broke upon the stillness, and Dora, shuddering, buried her face in the bosom of her friend, crying, “ Wake, wake ; do you not hear the cry of the owl ? ”

Mequa did not move, and Dora grew alarmed. She shook her violently, and at length Mequa arose from the mats, angry.

“ The white Doe is a great medicine woman ; why should she bring sleep to the eyes of Mequa ? ”

Dora shook her head ; she did not understand the meaning of Mequa ; she was unconscious of her strange mesmeric power.

The Indian girl cast angry glances at her guest, saying :
“ You have eaten savin and dragon’s tongue.”

Dora opened her large blue eyes in wonder.

“ You will cast a spell over the heart of Ramapaugh ; you have the power of the serpent when he lures the poor bird to his destruction. Why would you cast the war-club of Weeng ” (the Indian God of Sleep) “ at the head of Mequa ? Go ; you will bring evil upon the wigwam of the Bald Eagle ! ”

She seized her by the arm and led her to the door ; but she quickly returned, muttering,

“ No, no, the Bald Eagle is terrible in his wrath ; he bade me keep her.”

“ Why did you sleep ? ” asked Dora.

Mequa did not answer ; she studied the face before her. To her untutored mind Dora might be some incarnated power whom it would be fatal to offend, or she might be some creature whose dangerous incantations controled all elemental powers. She stood long in thought, while Dora, unconscious of her presence, leaned dreamily upon the skins, looking at the tongues of flames shooting from the burning torches. A new thought occurred to the Indian girl, which in part allayed her apprehensions, and she stooped down to read the eyes of her companion. She seemed satisfied with her scrutiny, for she at once brought food and placed it before her, saying :

“ Eat, White Doe, eat ; the moon has come to sleep in your eyes, and the Great Spirit speaks through your lips ; the spring shines upon your cheek, and winter plays in your hair. Mequa will be a sister to the White Doe.”

Saying this, she disposed the couch for the night, fastened the entrance, and threw torches upon the hearth. When at length Dora slept, she brought out the moccasins of the Bald Eagle and his robe of skins and placed them beside her, and, with her head upon them, slept.

C H A P T E R V.

THE STAR OF STARS.

MADAME MONTAGNIE was one of those grave, dignified widows whom we sometimes meet, who show their respect for the dead by looking "well to the ways of their household," and their affection for his memory by taking the place of father and mother also to the children he has left, and their tenderness for him by retaining his name, and preserving the estate intact as he would have done.

Wendell Montagnie was the pride no less than the stay of the household, and a glance at the mother and son as they stood together the day after the interview with Washington, which we have described, showed how much of the beauty of the son was inherited from the mother; hence it was the common saying that "he was born to good luck." The same indefinable grace was there; the bright, animated look only to be found in the finest temperaments; the slight wave of the hair; the composed demeanour, and that something, felt, but not to be described, which at once inspires confidence in the observer.

The mother was tall and slender; her habitual attention to the wants of those about her had given a slight stoop to her shoulders, not unbecoming, while the motions of her hands were of that wavy, directing kind which we sometimes see in old paintings, and which springs naturally from the habits of authority gently excersised.

She stood now in her loose morning robe, just within the hall, and her maidens were passing back and forth, taking the necessary orders for household labour. Pans and milk-pails glanced by, intermingled with the swing of short petticoats, and the liberal gleams of tidy ankles. A pretty Dutch damsel, with a smart foot and coquettish

boddice, was counting out skeins of linen for the loom, which hung partly upon hers and partly upon the arms of Dame Montagnie. The mother welcomed her son with a bright open glance, and then, with more speed than heretofore, she counted the remaining skeins, and gave them into the hands of the pretty Gertrude, who dropped a curtsey, which threw the brief skirt into some action, and then disappeared. Mother and son now entered the room together.

“I have come, dear mother,” began the youth, “only to say good morning. I must, within an hour, be on my way to Morristown, carrying despatches for the commander-in-chief.”

The mother laid her hand tenderly upon the shoulder of her son, and was silent.

“I may be gone a few days, and I may not return until the movements of the army decide upon further measures,” continued the youth.

“That is, my son, until some decisive battle shall determine the fate of the country.”

The silence of Montagnie gave assent, and she laid her head upon the shoulder of her child. The youth felt her trembling pulsations, and knew that, slight as was the external manifestation, it told of deep and intense anguish. She at length raised her head.

“I am proud, Wendell, of the favour shown you by the good general; but in order to merit it do not risk too much a life so—”

Her voice ceased, and the sentence remained incomplete, but the young man knew what was meant by the tears that fell upon his shoulder, and which the thin dress of the season rendered palpable.

“Country and friends, dear mother,” returned Mon-

tagnie, after a pause ; "I feel as if all that I can do, to yield my life even, were nothing to honour the one and prove my worthiness of the other."

"And Katrina, Wendell?"

"I know you are not pleased with her, dear mother ; I wish it were otherwise."

"God help you, Wendell ; she is a giddy, thoughtless girl, and a Tory at that," replied the mother warmly.

"I know it all ; do not speak of it at this time, dear mother. I am an infatuated fool it may be, but forget it now. And, mother, I wish you would see her if—if I am long gone."

Madame Montagnie started, a shade of anxiety visible upon her speaking face ; but she replied,

"Go, my son, and my blessing go with you. All that you love is sacred to me. I will even love the imperious spoiled beauty for your sake. There is Blanche to say godspeed."

Wendell greeted his gentle sister affectionately and gayly.

"Give me a round sounding smack, sister, and be sure to keep this till I come back. Let me see—what are your duties, girl?"

"To feed the doves, to worry the kitten, shun the beaux, and love Katrina."

"An excellent lesson well recited ; be sure you practice the 'rede,'" he said, as he sprung lightly to the back of his charger, and, with a gallant wave of the hand, turned away. As he did so the horse stumbled. There was great rolling up of the whites of negro eyes at that ill omen, and Jake, the favourite groom, rushed forward, exclaiming,

"Gorry, massa, git down, please ; here's a buckle loose."

The young man did as he was desired, and, after Jake had fumbled for a space about the straps, he declared all right, and this time Wendell galloped away in approved style.

“What for yer tell lie, Jake?” asked an old negro, who had been going through a variety of gesticulations to obviate any threatened ill-luck. “What for yer tell a lie, Jake? Didn’t the dominie tell yer last Sunday that liars are every son of ‘em to be drownded in a pond of fire and brimstone?”

“Gi! won’t that singe ‘em up, ‘specially the brim-stone!” ejaculated another darkey.

Jake thrust his hands to the lowest depths of his pockets, leaned his head back against a column of the piazza, rolled up his eyes, crossed one leg over the other, and replied solemnly,

“I hears what the dominie says, and I reads the trufe in the good Book; but the case is this, the horse stumbles as he not never stumbled afore—the horse, him feel ill-luck in the marrow of his bones. Masser Wendell go little ways—that one short journey; he carry-off the ill luck. He get off; I say all the time ‘good Lord deliver us,’ and he mount hisself again, start another journey all right.”

There was a burst of admiration at the wisdom and piety of Jake, and a dozen darkeys eyed the discomfited negro triumphantly. He, nothing daunted, repeated the words of the dominie with a shake of the head.

Jake rolled his eyes right and left, waiting for some one of his satellites to reply. There was a dubious rubbing at the back of heads, a slow shaking of them, but no answer, and Jake stepped forth from his pedestal of dignity, and with a wave of the hand replied,

"I did tell a lie, spite of the solemcolly trufes of de good Book, and spite of de exhorsetations of de dominie, when he stands under de sounding board every Sunday, like a 'normous platter ready to fall on his head, as has'nt no hair to break de blow."

"Gi! gi! wouldn't it smash him small!" exclaimed a dozen voices, the owner of each one lifting up one leg, and rubbing the side of his shin.

"Silence" cried the eloquent Jake; "silence!" In a moment every foot was down, every head cocked upon one side intently listening.

"I told that lie; I glories in it! I's no coward and sneak. When it's brought up ag'in me—I'll own up like a gen'leman. I'll do it. I'll say in justimentation, and to show I knows the consequentialities, 'Yes, I lied, and the gen'leman darkey as won't take a little red-hot brimstone for a gen'leman that he loves do not deserve the name.'"

Saying this he smashed his hat hard down upon the top of his head, dug both hands into his pockets, and stalked away amid the delighed murmurrs of his associates—even the old negro eyeing him with a sort of awful pleasure, and saying to himself:

"His blood is al'ays red-hot—a drop more or less mightn't hurt."

Wendell rode gayly onward, waving his hand, and waving kisses to the young belles of the village, with whom he was a favourite; pretty girls blushed and smiled as they greeted the handsome young man, who sat his horse so well, and whose smile was so frank and winning. Passing down the principal street, it was natural that he should glance at the windows of old De Witt as he went by. To his surprise, Mistress Katrina

was leaning from her chamber lattice, humming a gay air, as if all the world were as merry as herself.

Montagnie inclined himself from his saddle, and was about to pass on when she accosted him.

“How far do you ride, Mr. Montagnie, so bright and early? Wait a bit, and I will have my pony and try a race with you.”

Before he had time to reply she darted away, and in a moment more was standing under the stoop, her light golden curls tossed by the fresh morning air, and her cheek, into which the colour of the peach glowed, and now flushed by coquetry, or it might have been a deeper feeling, the hue invaded for a moment brow and neck.

“I fear I can not share your race this morning,” said Montagnie. “I am ordered upon service which admits of no delay.”

“And pray where do you go, Mr. Montagnie, that you claim the right of incivility to a lady?”

“Pardon me, Miss De Witt, my time is not my own—it is pledged to the service of my country; but at some future day may I not claim the promise of a morning ride with you?”

The maiden slightly elevated her eyebrows, and tapped her foot lightly upon the step, as she replied:

“In good faith, Mr. Wendell, I never know any thing beyond the present moment, which I find abundantly pleasant.”

There was a roguish smile mingling with these words which induced the young man to dismount, and to take the hand of the little lady, which he carried to his lips.

“Well, and where do you carry that fine horse of yours?—good Hunter, noble Hunter;” and she lavished

endearments upon the horse as if to provoke the spleen of its master. "Neow don't take him deown to camp." she laughed, her silvery accents assuming a nasal twang, a species of mimicking which could sit well only upon a pretty woman. Even this grated upon the ears of her lover, who turned almost coldly away.

"I must not wait here, Miss Katrina, however pleasant it may be. But, Miss De Witt, I must say, I could wish—oh, how earnestly!" he resumed in a warmer tone, "that our cause were as dear to your heart as it is to mine. You do not, you can not, know the nobleness of the men who are struggling to make our country free. You know not the blood, the sacrifice—God forbid you should know!—but the time will come when it will be known, and then these men will seem little less than demigods."

Katrina looked up in his face so admiringly, even tenderly, with trembling lip, that, had not the youth been filled with the magnitude of the sentiment which now absorbed him, he would have spoken more tenderly, and more in reference to his fair listener. The maiden felt piqued, and, tapping her toe again upon the sill, she responded, in a gay voice :

"Truth ! Mr. Montagnie—honour bright ! I did not think you had been so eloquent. Did I not regard loyalty as the jewel of virtues, one indeed which holds all others in harmony, you might convert me to your new system of doctrines ?"

"I know what you would imply, dear Katrina ;" this time the girl had her hand upon the riding-whip in the hands of her lover, and kept her lids bent downward. "I know you would say that he who is disloyal to king may be disloyal to love; is it not so ?"

Katrina looked up with her arched smile. "I can not make speeches and commentaries both ; but, truth to say, we were so content and secure before this terrible war, and the English officers so courteous, that really I see no good in killing them."

Montagnie laughed heartily at the simplicity of this pretty speech from pretty lips, and then said :

"Ay, if that is all, Katrina, we won't quarrel. But now I know not when we shall meet again. Perhaps not till the fate of the country is decided."

A slight shade passed over the face of Katrina, which she chased away with her usual address, and she inquired.

"Well, and where do all these gallant Hotspurs charge?" —and she hummed in an undertone the words of Yankee Doodle :

"Father and I went down to camp."

Montagnie recoiled with real bitterness, and placed one foot in the stirrup.

"Miss De Witt, God forbid that I should cross your path in the least. There is not—there can be no sympathy between us ! "

Katrina's fair brow reddened, and she even bit her lip ; but the tears gushed to her eyes a moment after.

"Wendell, I dare say you are right. My sentiment of loyalty is as strong as yours that you call patriotism. I like not this facility of change."

Montagnie would have replied—he would have answered to the tears rather than the words of Katrina ; but at this moment the rough hand of the Tory De Witt was laid upon her shoulder, who drew her into the house, pouring out at the same time a mixture of Dutch, French, and English invective against herself and the "renegade young rebel," as he was wont to call Montagnie.

Right glad was Wendell thus to have escaped the scrutiny of both mother and mistress in regard to his destined mission. Neither had conceived of the peril he was about to encounter, and now that nothing lay before him but his duty to his country he rode on with freer heart, losing his individual importance in the magnitude of the cause. Then he remembered the contempt of Katrina for this very cause, and again he felt himself a freer and stronger man, as he said to himself:

“Every thing is contemptible—every thing in life, in times like these, except the hopes of the freeman. I will forget her, as I do myself.”

But the tear of Katrina glistened before his mind’s eye, and he put spurs to his horse, that he might waste the undue sensibility which it engendered by action. Wheeling his horse round an angle of a street, he gave one last glance at the windows of old De Witt. There was the gleam of a white handkerchief from the window. The young man paused an instant, waved his hand in the air in return, and then rode onward with a flushed cheek and beating heart. That token of regard, the momentary flash of the white hand, had scattered his doubts to the wind.

“Irascible fool that I am,” he muttered to himself; “what right had I to take offence because she tuned her sweet lips to our patriotic air? How do I know that there was mockery in it? Impertinent, conceited coxcomb that I am! Because a score of girls flatter me I take offence at the wilfulness of one, the brightest of them all—the star of stars—the queen of queens!”

CHAPTER VI.

A LOVE PASSAGE.

IT is well known that the Tory families of the period were mostly allied to the nobility of the mother country, or held official appointments under the crown ; hence they were apt to look with contempt upon the Whigs, who, though led by persons of superior birth, embraced the yeomanry and mechanical as well as maritime interests of the rising republic. The undisguised favour with which Katrina De Witt regarded the young rebel was met with determined contempt and opposition by her family, most especially by her father, who, Tory to the heart, naturally wished to ally his daughter to one associated by birth, principle, and interests with his own party.

He was warmly seconded in these views by Colonel Vinton, whose undisguised admiration of the provincial belle seemed likely to realise the wishes of De Witt. Katrina, however, was not disinclined to the use of her power ; she would coquet with a dozen of her admirers, and leave each one to dream over her pleasant sallies, recall her bright glances, and yet doubt whether he held one thought in the fancies of the sprightly maiden.

“Shame on you,” cried the proud old gentleman, “to be seen talking to that Puritanic renegade, who disgraces his king and country. I would as soon see you married to Black Dick of the Devil’s Pulpit.”

Katrina was genuine enough to shudder at this association, for the atrocities of the young renegade were too notorious for disguise ; but, with her ever-ready self-possession, and unwilling to irritate her father unnecessarily, she responded demurely,

“Black Dick is a comely youth.”

At this moment Colonel Vinton entered, to whom she continued,

“Good morning, Colonel Vinton. Did you hear my praise of Black Dick?”

“I have not the honour of knowing whom Miss De Witt thus designates; but if accounted worthy of praise from her lips, I readily endorse him.”

And he bent a pair of large admiring eyes upon her face.

“Have a care, Colonel, or you may find it not altogether a safe criterion.”

“May I venture to ask who Black Dick may be?”

“Nay, Colonel, the name is suggestive of the Black Douglas, Black Forest, and all that is courtly, dark, and mysterious. Accept the illusion, and lift not the veil—”

She was interrupted in her rattling speech by De Witt, who broke in with a laugh, which ill concealed his real anger.

“Black Dick, Colonel, is a marauder, a thief, a double traitor and murderer—the most infamous scoundrel of the day!”

“Papa, that is not mildly spoken, but you will admit he sits a horse well, and rides like the best—”

“Ay, ay, girl, he has a taste in horseflesh, and steals only the best. Not a week ago I saw him tearing down the Cleave with my noble white charger, which I had refused to sell to Sir Henry Clinton himself.”

“It took courage to do that in the face of his owner,” muttered the girl.

“Oh, nobody doubts the courage of the scoundrel.”

By this time the party had reached the parlour, and

Katrina ran her fingers down the keys of the spinet, and half unconsciously struck into the notes of Yankee Doodle. Colonel Vinton joined in chorus, and the giddy Kate sung in nasal twang with great glee. They were interrupted by Mrs. De Witt, who, to the amazement of the little group, laid a plump matronly hand upon the fingers of her daughter.

“Hush, Kate, hush ; I do not like this foolery.”

Katrina wheeled round on the music stool, and, with a merry but surprised look, which well became her red lips and dark eyes, exclaimed,

“Wonder upon wonders ! Mamma is turning rebel !”

“Nay, Kate ; but when I remember our friend Burgoyne and Saratoga that tune has lost its zest.”

Colonel Vinton coloured, and Katrina, dropping her lids with a look too demure to be real, said, in a low voice :

“You remember, Colonel, our friend was obliged to lay down his arms to his own music.”

“Why his own music, Midget ?” cried De Witt.

“Oh, papa, you know General Burgoyne composed Yankee Doodle while his troops were stationed in Boston, and the Provin—rebels, I mean, adopted it and have made it—”

“Glorious !” chimed in Madame De Witt.

“Dame ! dame ! have a care,” cried her husband.

“Yes, glorious ; for, whether they are conquered or conquer, their attempt, their struggle for great things, will never be forgotten.”

“Play ‘God save the King,’ Midget,” roared De Witt, for he was too fond a husband to bandy words with his true wife.

Katrina obeyed, playing with taste and spirit, no way daunted, though conscious that the proud eyes of Colonel

Vinton read her face with admiration. When was ever a lovely woman disinclined to admiration, most especially when that beauty comprised golden hair and creamy skin, giving the promise of blue eyes under the black lashes, and she conscious, too, that she had only to lift her lids, and electrify the gazer by flashing upon him dark-brown eyes, nearly black, soft as the dove's, or fiery as the eagle's?

We ought to say that Colonel Vinton was an English officer, who had been wounded and taken prisoner by the patriots, and had been kindly nursed and hospitably entertained by the De Witts. A prisoner upon parole, waiting for an exchange, his situation would have been both irksome and mortifying, but for the more insidious wounds of the love god, in the shape of the lovely Katrina. Never were circumstances more favourable for the prowess of the wily god; a handsome soldier, unmistakeably brave, young, and accomplished, nursed by a beautiful girl—one, moreover, tender of heart, despite her caprices, as was evident by her innumerable pets, which half converted the house into a menagerie.

Blanche Montagnie had divided with Katrina the task of beguiling the long, wearisome hours of convalescence. She had read to him, sung to him, and, in her pretty, earnest way, sought to win him over to the patriot cause.

"The Colonel would be quite irresistible, Katrina," she said with naiveté, "were he not a royalist."

"And what am I, pray?" asked her friend.

Blanche coloured and laughed, and then replied, archly, "I think I know who might convert you to our cause, if, indeed, you need conversion, which I doubt."

Katrina blushed to the roots of her golden hair, and stooped down to caress some young rabbits, which came to the hand of their pretty mistress to be fed.

They were now joined by Colonel Vinton, a little pale, and hence apt to be interesting to young ladies. He made one think of the old lines,

“ How happy could I be with either,
Were t’other dear charmer away.”

For his admiration vacillated between the softness and sweet simplicity of Blanche, and the high spirits and wit of Katrina.

One thing was noteworthy. As he gave an arm to each of the girls, Blanche coloured and trembled, while Katrina took it with perfect indifference.

Mr. De Witt was not pleased as he marked this disposition of the little group, and he hastened to relieve Colonel Vinton of one of his burdens.

“ Miss Blanche, you promised to see my splendid young filly which I am just breaking into saddle.”

And he took her arm, and led her off to the stables. Katrina pouted, and Blanche was not over pleased ; but young maidens are often doomed to experiences of the kind by managing parents.

“ Blanche cares no more for horseflesh than she does about the fifth wheel of a coach,” said Katrina.

“ Therein she differs from her lovely friend.”

“ Her lovely friend is heterodox in almost all feminine matters, Colonel.”

“ I hardly think it ; if she affects to differ it is only to impart a grace to the new and unexpected view.”

Katrina’s brow contracted. She saw the tête-a-tête was verging upon dangerous ground, and she felt a positive dislike to the Colonel for presuming to compliment her.

“ Colonel Vinton, the only lovely being of my sex whom I positively envy is the wife of the Bald Eagle.”

“The handsome squaw?”

“Even so. I am half resolved to marry, and to marry some fierce freebooter, like Black Dick, or some towering savage, like Ramapaugh, just to escape compliments all the rest of my life.”

“Miss De Witt is cruel; she not only scorns the devotion of her admirers, but she even clips the wings of their fancy. The beautiful must not hope to escape the expressions of admiring observers, whether married or single; the star is not injured by the worship of the glowworm.”

“That means”—this with an affectation of simplicity—“a cat may look upon a king. I should like to see the man who would dare cast an admiring glance at the beautiful Mequa. He might feel the fingers of the stout warrior playing unpleasantly with his scalp-lock.”

“Oh, Miss Katrina, what a horrible idea!”

“Yes, I deal in them,” she answered, drily.

Colonel Vinton apologized, and then, at the suggestion of Katrina, followed Blanche and her father to see the paces of the young filly. Could we look into the heart of the wayward girl, we should find that, under all this badinage, she was thinking deeply and sorrowfully of the devoted youth who rode away that morning, with an angry spot on his brow, and a doubt in his heart, which she might have dispelled, and did not.

“Wendell is a proud youth,” she said, inwardly. “He is exacting and imperious, and how well he looks in his haughty moods! How grandly he talks, too! How he shows ‘Hyperion to a satyr,’ contrasted with this milksop English colonel! Ah, me! we should do nothing but quarrel; and yet—and yet—did he but know it, I would resign all my wilfulness to be ruled by his dear hand!”

and the tears gushed to her eyes, as these thoughts, one after another, coursed through her mind.

C H A P T E R V I I

THE DIE IS CAST.

UPON returning to the camp, Montagnie found the usual routine of military duty unchanged. There were the morning review, the camp fires, the firearms stacked for inspection, and the poor garments of the soldiery spread out for washing and airing, together with the ordinary sounds of light jesting and mirth, half bitter and half careless, growing out of the hardships or inaction of the period. Some, more prosperous than others, were sending their clothing to the neighbouring farm-houses for renovation—and groups of these messengers were disposed about, giving to the scene an aspect of cheerful, busy idleness, far from being unpicturesque, as the morning sun lighted the white canvas tents, and a fitful breeze swayed them to and fro. Montagnie was surprised at this appearance of inaction, having supposed, from the remarks of Washington and Hamilton, that the troops were to be immediately on the march.

Reaching the quarters of the commander-in-chief, he found all in readiness for his departure, together with another dispatch to be delivered at West Point, which he received from the hands of Hamilton.

“I shall sell my life as dearly as possible, you may be sure, Hamilton; but, really, I should like to know upon what pretext I lose it,” said Montagnie.

Hamilton this time looked grave, was severe, and his answer was so ambiguous that Montagnie felt himself treated after a schoolboy fashion, as if expected to obey

quite as much because he is young in years as because he is subordinate, and to whom it is not worth while to give a reason.

"When you reach Morristown," replied Hamilton, "all will be made clear to you."

"Reach Morristown! I shall do that when I am bullet-proof, Colonel, not before. Confound this mystery; I won't stay to be shot like a lame pigeon, be the case what it may; if a stout heart and good horse can double the ramparts of Ramapo unscathed I shall go through. Farewell."

He put spurs to his horse, and was away as he spoke, but presently wheeling round, he returned to the side of Hamilton.

"My friend, I have quarrelled with my mistress, and withheld the truth of my mission from my mother; I would have you set me well with these in case—." The young man dashed a tear from his eye as he spoke, and Hamilton replied only by a warm pressure of the hand.

Montagnie at first rode on with a speed adapted to the excited state of his own feelings. But as the noble scenery of the Hudson opened before him, and his eyes wandered away where mountain swelled beyond mountain in the distance, a sense of individual nothingness grew upon him, while nature, the great material world, loomed into a gloomy vastness, a solemn and overwhelming magnitude, crushing and grinding him down like the omnipotence of a fate. Gradually the rein slackened, and he moved mechanically onward, feeling himself impelled to a certain doom. Montagnie was young in years, with a strong and buoyant physique, through which the finer elements played with a readiness of response like

that of the wind harp to the passing breeze, and as the melody of water and wild bird found their way to his ear his mood changed to one of human interest.

What wonder, then, that Montagnie looked upon the earth, beholding a new beauty therein ; that his own nature felt anew its capacity for enjoyment, and its terrible counterpart for suffering ! What wonder that his nerves recoiled from the trial before him, and he grasped at life as a thing he could not resign ; he, in the flush of youth and vigour, with hope, and love, and honour before him ! Ay ! the last—honour—he ground his teeth at the thought—a gorgeous bauble, understood only by the few, and graced always by the funeral garlands of its victims ! Idle as it seemed to him now, the word had its spell of power, and carried him beyond the momentary weakness ; again he lost himself in the urgencies of life—again he felt his own subordination to the good of others.

“ It must be,” he said, “ that the few will be sacrificed to the many. The poor fellows who are fighting our battles die and are forgotten ; what does it matter, so long as a fair inheritance is preserved for the many who shall come after us ? ”

Such were a portion of the many thoughts which stirred in the bosom of the youth as he entered West Point. Here he was delayed longer than he had anticipated, so that the day was fast wearing when he again found himself on his route.

Meanwhile the great commander silently adjusted his plans, wrote out the portion to be submitted to his aides, and then laid himself down for that brief sleep which men of achievement are able so marvelously to abridge.

The first one who claimed audience upon his awaking

was the one anxiously expected, Ramapaugh, or, as he was better known in the army, the Bald Eagle. With stately step the chief entered the august presence, and stood in silence.

“My brother, speak ; are thy warriors prepared ?”

“The Panther is crouched for the spring.”

“Not a step must be lost, Ramapaugh ; we must move silent as the night—swift as the wind.”

“A warrior is at every pass, and a true shot covers it.”

“That is well. Where is Black Dick ?”

“Even the Bald Eagle cannot hold the slippery eel.”

“That may be bad,” mused Washington, thoughtfully.

“Does he hang about the camp of the enemy or our own ?”

“He has mounted a white horse, and plays the trooper.”

“Where ?”

“In West Point and Rainapo ; he will follow the troops to New York.”

“That is well. You know our messenger, chief ?”

“The shapely young pine, Montagnie ?”

“Ay.”

“As I know the eagle upon the rock ; brave as the bravest, true as the truest.”

Washington smiled sadly, and the chief continued,

“Was there no other than the best ? None but the shapeliest to offer his breast to the leaden fire ?”

“Only the best at a time like this, Ramapaugh, when our army is doing battle elsewhere. Look to the fate of this young man, Ramapaugh.”

“Will the doe forget her young ?” answered the chief, tenderly.

After some further directions the Bald Eagle parted

from the commander-in-chief. Shortly after was called that momentous council of war which decided the fate of an empire.

The sun slowly sank behind the Highlands, setting them as it were in a garniture of ruby ; the October air was mild and genial, for the lovely period of Indian summer revived the delicious days of the summer solstice without its depressing heat ; and thus, in our climate, the season dies like the dolphin—gorgeous in colour, and affluent in charms. The troops, weary with inaction, clustered in groups, amused themselves with quoits and the various games of the camp ; children from the village bartered their fruits, or played with the soldiery ; women returned the linen of the officers, and took away huge hampers to undergo the process of ablution ; now and then the voice of prayer ascended from a tent, showing its inmate a noble soldier of the church militant in the hope of the church triumphant. Here a solitary bugle started the echoes, and there a flute breathed the language of some soul in whom love had divided the devotion of a soldier to the glories of war.

The light disappeared. The stars looked from their thrones of peace upon a peaceful camp ; all was hushed but the measured tread or challenge of the sentinel.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WHITE APPARITION.

IN the meanwhile poor Maggie, with little companionship except that of her moody mother-in-law, grew every day more pale and sick at heart. Richard came home only at long intervals, and that by stealth. She saw him looking haggard, but dauntless always ; and he was always

gentle and even tender to her. He avoided his mother; high words sometimes passed between them, after which the old woman would sit for hours croning over the embers, smoking her pipe, and sometimes groaning audibly. Maggie took no interest in the outside world, and had no resources against the miseries of her solitary home. She who had shrank from the terror of storm and tempest, as the young generally do, learned to anticipate their coming with delight, for stormy nights brought her husband home.

The wind was gusty, driving heavy clouds over the valley. Maggie stood in the twilight watching these indications of stormy weather. The old woman was sitting, as was her wont, over the coals, when the former approached and asked, "Will it storm to-night, mother?"

"No. It is only wind. I wish it would hail cats and dogs."

"I shouldn't like to be out in such a storm," said Maggie, with a faint laugh.

"You'll have to meet a worse, and so shall I. Dick's a thankless lad, and so is Robert as to that; they both keep away from their poor old mother."

And she began to sniffler, and swing her leg, and bring her heel down upon the hearth, in the old way when under mental excitement.

"Poor Richard is troubled and unhappy, mother; I am sure he loves you."

"As much as the wolf loves its dam," and she smoked furiously.

Maggie slipped aside into the dark shadows of the room, and seated herself by the empty cradle, silent and motionless.

At length there was a tap upon the window, and she opened the door, refraining from all demonstrations of attachment till her husband entered and the bars were

let down, then she clung to him, and begged he would not leave her again.

Clasping her in one arm as if she were only a child, he approached the old woman, who had merely turned her head, and eyed the scene askance.

“Mother, I am going. I know not when I shall return; be kind to poor Maggie.”

“Yes, yes, be kind to Maggie; no kindness for the poor old creeter that brought you into the world.”

Richard set his teeth violently, but he answered, “I will send for you both, as soon as it is safe to do so.”

“You will never send for us; it will never be safe.”

“We are reaping what we have sown, mother; the whirlwind may scatter us.”

“Yes, yes, you mean I have brought you and your father to this. It’s all the same; I never expected any kindness—never had any.”

The unhappy man laid his heavy hand on her shoulder as Ramapaugh had done, and she turned again to a ghastly whiteness, but Maggie’s little hand loosened the grip.

“Mother, let it content you that I make no reproaches. I may never return. Be kind to poor Maggie.”

Saying which he lifted the latter in his arms and kissed her tenderly.

“My poor little girl, my good little girl. You’ll pray for poor Dick when he’s gone, won’t you, dear?”

Maggie only answered by sighs and tears. He took her arms from his neck, laid her upon the wooden settle, and was gone. Maggie sought her place by the side of the empty cradle, where she knelt for a long time, and then approached the old woman, who crooned, muttered, and sniffled over the embers.

"Mother," said Maggie, "have I been a good girl to you?"

"Good enough; what do you ask that for?"

"Do you think I was kind to poor little Dicky?"

"Hold your tongue, you fool!"

"Oh! mother, do you think God will answer the prayers of such a weak, sinful creature as I am, and comfort poor little Dicky?"

These innocent words from the innocent lips of her daughter-in-law seemed to goad the woman to frenzy. She brought down her heel with vehemence, and cried, in a sharp voice,

"I know nothing about it. Hold your tongue, and go to bed."

"Mother, will you kiss me, and say you forgive me?"

At this the face of the woman assumed a grim smile, and she held up her thin lips to those of the tender Maggie, and then resumed her pipe, and swung her knee, and brought down her heel heavily.

"Good night, mother."

"Have done with foolery, you baby," cried the old woman, fretfully.

Maggie had taken a shawl over her head, and she now opened the door and went out into the dark night.

We left Dora tenderly cared for by the Indian girl, who, fully persuaded of her insanity, now treated her with respect even bordering upon awe. She listened reverently to the incoherent murmurings of her sleep, and watched her utterance as that of an oracle. The two gathered wild buds and autumn leaves together, and fished with hook and line from the rocks. Dora was

restless, and often turned her full eye upon the face of her companion.

“Where is the Bald Eagle?” at length she asked.

Mequa pointed to the king of birds soaring above the Thor, and ready to settle upon its eyrie there. Dora's eyes flashed with resentment at this subterfuge, and she slapped Mequa's cheek with the back of her hand. The wife of a chief sprang to her feet with ready anger and outraged dignity, but, remembering that her companion was under the special care of the Great Spirit, who would punish an injury done to his chosen child, she meekly crossed her hands upon her bosom, and sat in silence.

“Where is the Bald Eagle?” reiterated the girl, fiercely.

“He has gone to the council of the great chief.”

Dora pressed her temples anxiously, and tried to follow up some thought which flitted her grasp, but it could not be. She soon relapsed into her dreamy listless demeanour, and joined Mequa in binding the berries of the wild rose into a coronal for her hair. Dora looked down at the reflection of herself in the stream, and instantly tore them away, pulled cruelly at the braids, till her hair floated free, a white banner in the twilight. As she did so the angry spot died away from her cheek, and she smiled upon her companion, who now took her by the hand and led her to sleep within the wigwam.

Mequa moved about with the stealthy tread of a young panther, and was greatly annoyed at the demonstrativeness of her companion, who lay upon the mats croning over and over again a foolish rhyme, which seemed to start to life amid the wrecks of her memory:

The lady waved a silken scarf ;
The knight his horse bestrode,
And kissed his hand, and kissed his sword,
As gallantly he rode.

She watched the sun that mounted high,
She heard the battle roar,
She marked the white steed riderless
Come dashing o'er the moor.

“Oh, gallant steed, oh, gallant hand,
Why parted ye this day?”
And wildly from the battlements
She tore the scarf away.

She mounted quick the milk-white steed,
And hastened to the fight,
Nor slackened once her fiery way,
Amid the lances bright.

Thus far did memory serve her, and then again she recommenced the melody, till Mequa sank to sleep.

How long she slept it is needless to say ; her companion lay croning her rhymes, her violet eyes wide open as they had been when Mequa's senses were lost in forgetfulness ; but a slight sound external of the wigwam had instantly aroused the faculties of the young savage. She lifted herself upon her elbow and listened intently ; she heard a knife rip the skin that guarded the entrance, and, quick as thought, she sprang to the portal, tomahawk in hand, and stood half bent, as beautiful and deadly as a young panther ready for a spring.

Dora watched her movements at first in silence ; but, unable to forecast danger, or divine cause for anxiety, she also arose from the mats and approached the door. In vain Mequa held up her finger in warning, in vain she laid her hands upon her lips in token of silence. Dora grasped the portal with a strong hand and tore it away.

Mequa gave one bound down the bank to the river, disengaged a canoe hidden among the foliage, and paddled out into the stream. She was not followed.

Dora, on the contrary, rounded the hut, and peered anxiously upon every side ; a voice whispered : “ White Witch !”

And to this she responded smilingly. It was Black Dick, the leader of the Cowboys, who called her. She followed in the direction of the voice, and seeing the man, as he stood, holding a magnificent white horse by the bridle, it became associated with the subject of the song, and she sang :

“She marked the white steed riderless
Come dashing o'er the moor—”

“ Whist ! shut up your noise,” said the man, shaking her hand from the bridle which she held. “ Where is the Bald Eagle ? ”

Dora pointed smilingly upward as Mequa had done, and then began her song again, eyeing the white horse with evident delight.

“ Did the Bald Eagle go down the river ? ”

Dora sang—

“ Oh ! gallant steed !—Oh ! gallant band !
Why parted ye that day ? ”

Black Dick stamped furiously ; he saw that the hut was occupied only by the women, and the sight of Dora half maddened him. He saw no way of learning what route had been taken by the chief ; he wished to learn whether his scouts were gone in the direction of the city or went up the river. One thing he had ascertained, Ramapaugh was gone, which indicated a march on the side of the patriots. Apparently assured in his own mind, he exclaimed, “ Now a clear race for New York ! ”

His hand was on the neck of the bridle ready for the spring, when suddenly Dora placed a foot in the stirrup, a hand upon his shoulder, and was on the back of the beast quick as a flash of lightning. With a sharp wrench the bridle snapped through his fingers, and the fiery animal darted down the pass, his fearless rider sending

back an insane shout of wild, fearful laughter. Black Dick sent a bullet after her, but it missed aim. He gnashed his teeth and loaded the air with curses ; then, realizing that he but lost time by his idle cursing, he sought the rendezvous of his companions, and made the best of his way to the Cleave, that he might warn the garrison there of the movement contemplated by Washington, and warn Sir Henry Clinton to concentrate his forces to await an attack.

Mounting a horse brought from the ambush near the Devil's Pulpit, Black Dick dashed down the pass, his horse leaving a fiery streak behind as his hoofs struck the flinty road. Had he paused at an angle in the pass he would have seen a woman emerge from the shadow of the rocks and hold up her hands imploringly as he went by, and he would have seen her gather the shawl about her and sink away amongst the tangled underbrush and wring her hands ; but she did not weep.

Here she had crouched herself like a hare pursued by the hunters, fearful to move, till at length she went to sleep, and He who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb" sent His angels to guard that innocent head.

CHAPTER IX.

WILD BIRDS WILL NOT BE CAUGHT.

THE day which saw the departure of Wendell upon his blindfold mission was one of peculiar beauty, and Mr. De Witt proposed that he and Katrina should escort the Colonel on his route to join Sir Henry Clinton, an exchange having been effected, an exchange which was less pleasing to the soldierly mind of Vinton than it might have been, but for the wounds, as we have before said, of

the wily, mischievous god, who shoots his arrows without reference to the comfort, convenience, or even respectability of the parties concerned.

No sooner had the orderly presented the military document to Colonel Vinton than he made haste to pour out the whole volume of his doubts, hopes, wishes, and chagrins into the ear of the fair Katrina ; but she, divining his purpose, baffled all his efforts at an interview. When, therefore, her father insisted on this ride she at once argued that the declaration would be made, and that her father so divined. But Katrina was not one to be overcome by any emergency, her spirit and resources being equal to all occasions. Now, however, her heart was a little tender over the departure of her lover, and she was less than ordinarily prepared for the foils of any witty encounter.

Colonel Vinton, on the contrary, was delighted with the prospect before him, and the three rode in the direction of the Cleave, the plumes of the maiden tossing in the air, and her silken hair, allowing a single curl to escape from the net which confined it, danced like a sunbeam over her shoulder. She had a way of lowering her dark-fringed lids, as if she wished the observer to admire her golden hair and stainless skin, and then lifting her eyes to enjoy the start of surprise in the beholder, who encountered black eyes instead of blue. We will not say this was a trick her beauty had taught her, nor do we affirm that such things come naturally to young girls, for Katrina knew her own loveliness, and was not devoid of the coquettish incident thereto.

Her slender waist and plump bodice showed well with the heavy folds of her riding-dress, as she curbed her snowy steed with perfect grace and self-possession. It

was a lovely vision to the young soldier ; and the father, pleased with the occasion, more than once lagged in the rear, not unwilling to favour the opportunity of the lover.

This manœuvre was by no means pleasing to the daughter, who, wheeling her horse sharply, exclaimed,

“ Fie, fie, dear papa, the pass is in the hands of our troops ; you will not have to breast a battery !”

“ Hold your idle tongue, Midget. Colonel, I miss my handsome Snowball. If it were not that the last trick of Black Dick was to betray the rebels, I would see him hung above his own Pulpit for his theft ; the rascal had the assurance to send me word he only borrowed the animal for urgent duty,” and the irritable old Tory laughed at the grim wit of the freebooter.

“ He has done us good service more than once,” returned the Colonel.

“ The treacherous dastard !” exclaimed Katrina

“ Who called him a comely youth ?” retorted her father.

“ Ah, papa, if you make me angry, you must not repeat my spleen. Black Dick is handsome, bad as he is, and brave, too ; he is a hero in one point, and—but these times make our woman-tongues too sharp. Oh, for the piping times of peace !” and she sang,

“ To sit all day in summer shade,
And only hear the song
Of birds or insects on the wing,
The peaceful hours along.”

The Colonel listened, enamoured at this outbreak of real feeling, and De Witt once more fell in the rear. Katrina was about to wheel her horse again, when Colonel Vinton arrested her.

“ Nay, Miss De Witt, this is cruel.”

"The times are cruel, Colonel Vinton, too cruel for idle thought and idle talk," and she touched the flank of her horse with her golden mounted whip, and then, conscious of her cruelty, bent her head upon his neck with caresses.

"Beautiful vixen," muttered the soldier to himself, and then, patting the neck of her steed, he said :

"Do you know, Miss De Witt, that we are on the eve of battle ; that perhaps we shall meet no more ?"

"I know it," she answered, and now she looked solemnly with her clear eyes into his face. Her lip trembled, and she went on. "I pray God prosper the right. Colonel Vinton, I am giddy, not brave ; I am weak, not worth the love of a true, brave man. There, now, do not interrupt—hear me out ; I am a baby, not a woman. At my window I shall hear the boom of cannon ; I shall see the flight of stragglers ; the roar of musketry will cause me to turn cold at the sight of blood. I shall pray and weep, and hide my head, and think of all the brave men dying and dead ; and, Colonel, I shall think of you. Nay, do not thank me—"

"You do not love me ?" interrupted the Colonel, turning very pale as he spoke. "Do not say it now, not to-day, Miss De Witt."

"Colonel Vinton, you are not the man to dodge a bullet. I do not think I can love like other girls. I—perhaps I like to be admired and not loved, Colonel. When my father calls me Midget he hits my character exactly."

"The time will come to you as it comes to all of us, Miss De Witt. May I not hope ?"

"There is nothing so deluding as hope, Colonel, and I must call that a poor speech for a strong man. We must return. Dear little Blanche, you must remember, has

parted with her brother" (a blush comes in here), "and she will be crying her eyes out unless I go and comfort her."

Here she flashed her wondrous eyes full upon those of the Colonel.

"I observed Miss Montagnie was very pale when we parted ; she seems greatly attached to her brother."

"Blanche is an angel—a right down angel, with wings just ready to burst out upon her shoulders ; she hasn't a single fault but that of being too good."

"She seems a most lovely girl."

"Seems, Colonel ? She is ! There is nothing like her. If the men were not all blind as bats they would rave about her."

"I am sure she merits all your praise, Miss De Witt. Perhaps—I beg your pardon—I have thought her a little tame."

"Tame ! Well, if men do not rush on to their own destruction, I will never express an opinion again ! What should a woman be ? Would you have her galivanting like mad for the purpose of showing she is not quite a fool ? "

"By no means, Miss De Witt ; perhaps I have overlooked the attractions of Miss Montagnie ; or perhaps they have been eclipsed by the brilliancy of my fair colloquist."

"Well, good-bye, Colonel. I wish you a grand battle and light wounds. In case of the latter, Blanche and I are at your service again."

With a wave of the hand she turned to her father, who took a farewell of Colonel Vinton in the more elaborate form of the period.

"If my last shots do not take effect the man is not

worth the powder. Poor dear Blanche! How she would hate me if she knew all!"

Mr. De Witt had been in great spirits; he noticed the animated colloquy of the two as they galloped along the road, and inferred that at least the subject was open for a favourable issue.

CHAPTER X.

THE THREE RIDERS.

WE must now detail some incidents in the career of Wendell Montagnie. Young, spirited, yet withal truly religious, he had yielded no lukewarm nor half service to his suffering country. Though not commissioned at this time in the army, no soldier had more fearlessly served its cause. Ready in resources, he had, in a time when the spiritual needs of the soldier were necessarily made secondary, more than once assumed the office of religious guide and comforter to the poor fellows dying of want as much as of wounds, barefoot, naked, and despairing. He was better known to the soldiery of both armies as an eloquent spiritual friend than as the high-toned, daring youth, honoured and beloved by Hamilton, and tenderly cared for by the Bald Eagle. Even Washington, who had more than once found his plans advanced by some unknown coadjutor, knew nothing of the youth as we know him, and Montagnie, content to serve his beloved country, made no effort to have his deeds either blazoned or acknowledged.

Really religious, as we have said, in character, he had more than once, under the garb of a minister of the Gospel, obtained important information for Washington and his aides. This character was no farce to him, and

he readily assumed it when the urgencies of his country required such aid.

But in rendering this service he had never carried a word in writing ; he relied solely upon an honest heart, a mind fruitful in resources, and a memory that never failed him.

He had more than once visited in this way, as a spiritual aid, the captive Americans at New York city, and confronted Sir Henry Clinton himself. He exhorted the faithful of either army to sobriety of life, and to bend their minds to the contemplation of eternal things, rather than waste themselves amid the temptations and perils of a soldier's life, forgetful of the Christian warfare. If, to screen the purpose of an emissary, willing to do something in the cause of patriotism, he sometimes assumed an extra appearance of cant, he may well be pardoned therefore ; and the nasal twang, if not altogether natural to him, the better concealed his designs. He cared not for the contempt cast upon himself, so long as the cause of God and country were advanced.

“What does it matter,” he murmured, “amid our little host of heroes that the turf is heaped upon one nameless grave ? My mother will weep ; Katrina, even will yield me one sigh, and then she will hum her Yankee Doodle over my grave.”

The times and the places have changed since the period of our story ; but there are those still living who point out the various routes of the agents of Washington in going to and fro from the different encampments of the army. The road is still in preservation which he caused to be constructed for their convenience, four or five miles to the north and west of the Valley of the Ramapo, which was at that time in possession of the

British, whose foraging parties greatly annoyed and distressed the inhabitants of the district. There are those who point out the path of Montagnie adown the valley, and show point after point which he passed, and how this and that position was under the protection of our own troops, and others were held by our foes. The walls of stone are yet visible where stood the forges, sometimes worked by one army, and sometimes by the other, in this region of iron, as the district changed hands in the chances of war. Still do these mighty engines of power belch forth their smoke and flame from a hundred forges, making the old woods to ring with the clanking of the metal, as they did more than a hundred years ago.

The battlements of Ramapo no longer bristle with artillery, nor resound to the tramp of the sentinel; the weary traveller, as he descends the narrow defile, no longer trembles lest some outrage, justified by the tumult of the times, be perpetrated upon himself; but in place of its ancient solitude, disturbed only by the moccasined feet of warrior or hunter, and in place of the pomp and circumstance of war, the black and fiery locomotive, like some huge dragon, rushes with burning speed along the highway, and plunges into the gloomy defile, leaving its thick vapours and breathings of flame to mark the path it has trodden.

The stars of a clear summer night looked softly downward as Montagnie moved adown the valley, and all the air was so still that the sound of his horse's hoofs broke upon the senses with a preternatural loudness at once startling and annoying, hemmed in, as he was, by the converging hills, which upon either side presented an almost perpendicular wall. From their top and sides the stiff

pines shot upward, gloomy and unyielding, their angular outlines affording no relief to an excited fancy. The rapid torrent of the Ramapo rushed onward in its compressed bed, and now and then a screech-owl, startled by the unwonted sound of steps at such an hour, flapped his noiseless wings and sought a deeper shade. Forcibly did the appropriate imagery of Scripture arise to his mind, as thus in solitude and at midnight he moved along this narrow defile—"Yea, though I walk through the dark valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

Looking upward, he perceived the stars begin to pale in the sky, and now was the time to increase his speed as he neared the ramparts. He put spurs to his horse, and then checked him again, for he caught the echo of hoofs galloping behind him. Already the light gleamed through the temination of the valley, and he heard the stirring sounds of the garrison, vigilant in their early duty. Looking backward, the obscurity prevented him from distinguishing the form of the stranger, whether friend or foe, and he had hardly time to reflect upon either when the horseman dashed by him with a speed that baffled pursuit, and in a guise to shock the coolest blood. A tall, slender woman gave the rein to a furious white charger, which leapt and snorted, threatening to unseat the rider, who nevertheless, yielding to every flexure of the animal, seemed rather to enjoy than be terrified at her frightful onward speed.

Indeed, it would seem as if both horse and rider were at that precise point which established an entire mesmeric sympathy between them, the bones of the two mechanically swinging in concert, and the white locks of the one tossing just as did the white mane of the other, so that,

at a distance, they not unaptly suggested the idea of the waving, shadowy outline of the last of the Centaurs.

Montagnie reigned up his own horse, fearing to accelerate the speed of the other, half in awe, also, of the strange steed and rider, which, in the dim light of the early morning, and in the shadow of overhanging rocks, wore a phantom-like aspect. White steed and white lady—streaming white mane and streaming white hair—might well suggest some fearful supernatural vision.

Onward rushed the pair—onward rushed young Montagnie; while down the rocky defile, not far in the rear clattered the hoofs of another steed in hot pursuit. Scarcely had the horseman breasted Montagnie, when the sharp ring of a bullet whizzed through the air, and Black Dick, on his black chargé, clattered by, the feet of the horse striking fire at every touch of the flinty road.

Montagnie spurred his horse to the utmost, for he saw the white phantom reel and fall—he saw the white horse fling itself with heavy leaps adown the cavernous way, and the black charger press onward with an equal speed.

Forgetful of his proximity to the fort, Montagnie dashed headlong. Black Dick was evidently expected, but our hero heeded not the challenge of the sentinel, nor the crack of musketry, he saw only a white writhing mass upon the highway, and the blood gushing over the white hair. He reined in his horse. Springing to the ground, he lifted the poor head from the dust, and laid it upon his knee, but the features were distorted with pain, and the small hand, pressed upon the chest, could not hold back the crimson flood.

Slowly the violet eyes unclosed, and looked around.

“Where is the Bald Eagle?” she asked. “Ah, I remember; he is gone, and, Mequa, tell him—

“I saw the white steed riderless
Come dashing o'er the plain—”

She sang the lines smilingly.

“Something hurts,” she cried, and then, with a slight gasp, her head fell down, half hidden in the white masses of her hair.

“Poor girl! dead, dead!” sighed Montagnie, gazing into the face, which already began to wear a serene and holy look.

Filled with emotion, he followed, mechanically, the body into the fort, scarcely conscious that he was himself a prisoner, and only outraged at the rude manner in which her poor garments were searched in quest of what she might be supposed to carry. When deprived of his own despatches he saw that his whole mission was at an end.

No sooner did he see the body of poor Dora decently disposed than he mounted his horse, and attempted coolly to go on his way, assuming at once the aspect of a clergyman. Slightly relaxing his muscles, and drawing his hair down upon his temples, the goodly youth wore an aspect so sanctimonious as might well lead his captors to doubt his identity.

“Here, where are you going?” demanded a soldier, who had watched his movements with some scrutiny.

“Even as the Apostle Philip exhorted and instructed the Eunuch, riding in a chariot, what hinders that we should here turn aside and worship?”

“No, no, you young hypocrite, didn’t we catch a sight of you tearing along the road as if Satan were in pursuit of his own? Besides, we have a bone to pick with you; so dismount and wait further orders.”

“The Lord forgive you, ye sons of Belial; if I rode in

a manner unsuited to a messenger of the Lord, know that these are times when even we are commanded to gird on carnal weapons, to subdue the flesh, and be instant in service. If ye found carnal writings upon my body, of which ye have despoiled me, am I responsible for the doings of those who may have converted a vessel of the Lord to ungodly purposes?"

"Ha, ha!" cried the soldier, dropping the reins of his horse. "So young a head to carry such a withered-up heart;" and, intent to carry the Intercepted Despatches speedily as possible down to New York, they wheeled about, thinking time of more value than even the punishment of a foe.

"Look here, you spooney of a man, look here; these will do the job for you. Go back and tell him that sent you we are ready for him. Yes, go; you can return with the joyful tidings! Ha, ha!"

With this, he held up the despatches, with the signature of Washington.

By this time the men put spurs to their horses, and Montagnie, looking after them till out of sight, did the same, casting off at once the air of sanctimonious humility so little accordant with his person.

A moment after, Montagnie might have been seen tearing down the road at a most unclerical speed. The men of the garrison sent after him three cheers and a round of bullets, supposing his speed to be caused by shame of his defeat.

"To home, spooney, and bring us some more news!" was shouted from the ramparts, and a wild laugh rang through the hills at the discomfited rider.

When the inhabitants of Newburgh retired on the night which we have described in a former chapter, the tents of the soldiery gleamed in the silence, and the whole round of military duty seemed unchanged. The many little offices performed by the poorer part of the population were still open. Many of the garments of the troops were in their possession, and nothing gave indications of change. One by one the lights disappeared ; the sounds of mirth or soldierly duty grew hushed, and town and camp were buried in silence.

When the morning appeared not a vestige of the camp remained. So silently and secretly had the work been performed that all seemed like the spell of enchantment. Where had been the stir and the tumult of armed men was now an unbroken solitude.

Battalion after battalion had moved out under safe and sure guides. Scouts had secured the passes. Stragglers had been forced to join the march, and an army, silent as death, made its way by the back road which we have before explained to the heart of the Jerseys.

While the hushed and delighted patriots thus marched to a new and final battle-field, the Intercepted Despatches, so carefully planned by Washington, were borne with the utmost speed to Sir Henry Clinton in New York, and resulted, as the commander-in-chief had anticipated, in the sudden withdrawal of the British naval forces from Chesapeake Bay to New York harbour.

On this memorable march Washington was calm, but utterly silent. A wave of the hand, a motion of the head sufficed. Hamilton rode upon one side, the Bald Eagle upon the other. The orders had been :

“Repel attack by the bayonet only ; not a gun to be fired.”

And thus beneath the midnight stars, ragged and worn, scant of provisions, scant of powder, marched onward the Forlorn Hope of the country. Calm as the Zeus of the ancient Greeks, moved the Pater Patriæ at their head. The mind shudders to contemplate what America might have been but for that midnight march.

The strategy of Washington had been complete. The Intercepted Dispatches entirely misled Sir Henry Clinton, and he learned his mistake only when the thunders of Yorktown awoke him to the truth, and the shame of the discomfited Cornwallis told that the struggle of seven long years had culminated in triumph to the rebels.

CHAPTER XI

LOVE-MAKING BY PROXY.

MR. DE WITT was by no means pleased at the hurried manner in which his daughter had taken leave of their guest on his way to join the royal army. Leaving her to a leisurely canter, however, he lingered behind, going over those elaborate courtesies, as we have said, incident to the times, and repeating again and again his expressions of goodwill.

“If you get winged again, Colonel, come to us, that’s all. My dame will keep your plate on the board till you come back, and as for Midget she’ll cry her eyes out.”

The Colonel wrung his hand, and shook his head doubtfully.

“No? I tell you she shall

Vinton smiled at the mal-a-propos assertion, but answered, “I fear your beautiful daughter will hardly waste a thought upon her unworthy admirer.”

“There it is, Colonel—that’s no way to win a girl!

Look here ; I have been a handsome man in my day, no handsomer than you, and yet I carried off the belle of New York, the finest girl in the colony. How did I do it? By George ! I loved her, to begin with. I was red and hot if anybody looked at her. She was saucy, too, like little Midget, but a great deal handsomer, taller, more of her. Well, there was a lawyer, and a doctor, and a general, and the deuce knows what more, spooneying and sweeting about her. I could not stand it. I said up and down, out and plain, ‘these chaps are not the kind for you, Miss Livingstone ; you’d be tired of them in a week. Come, now, do stop fooling ; take me ; you won’t do better ;’ and then I put in the love, and all that ; got down on one knee (I was slender in those days, Vinton ; you would not think it), and kissed her hand.”

The Colonel laughed outright, a pleased, sympathetic laugh, such as gentlemen give each other in such cases, which arrested the long speech of De Witt, who gave a more uproarious demonstration of the same kind.

“And what did Miss Livingstone say ?” asked Vinton.

“ You ought to have seen her laugh ! It was a perfect cataract of dimples, and she boxed my ear with such a little, soft hand ! This was being kinder than I expected, and I clinched the bargain by kissing. Yes, I kissed her on the lips ; she was proud, and wouldn’t go behind such a kiss, and I don’t think she ever repented of it.”

The hearty old Tory rubbed his hands at the memories of his youth, and really looked young, and audacious, and handsome as he spoke.

“ I could walk up to a cannon’s mouth easier than take a woman’s hand,” replied Colonel Vinton, wheeling his horse as he spoke.

“ The more fool you, Vinton ; talk about winning a

woman. Pshaw ! it's all nonsense. You must take them and keep them ; try to win the perverse little witches, and ten to one they'll say no when they want to say yes. My Midget refuse a fine fellow like you ! Stop a bit ! not so fast ! Did you ever ask her ? She's not a morsel to be laid on any man's platter without the asking ! ”

Vinton explained promptly the state of the case, for he saw the irritable old Tory was just on the point of picking a quarrel with him.

“ All very well ; she is a dainty bit, as you say, Colonel ” (and here, by way of parenthesis, we must do the lover the justice to say he had not presumed to utter any such phrase, and tried hard to edge in a disclaimer, which was crowded out by a wave of the old gentleman's hand), “ a dainty bit, as you say ; steps like a stag ; high head like a full-blooded filly ; tight and bright, with a tongue to shame all the books ever written. You shall have her, Vinton. Midget knows better than to cross her old father. Come up as soon as this battle is over.”

Vinton would have said many things, such as honourable men utter in cases of the kind, but De Witt wheeled his horse round, waving his hand, ejaculating,

“ I know ; I understand ; all nonsense,” and turned in the direction of Newburgh.

It did not take Mr. De Witt long to overtake his daughter, whom he accosted with :

“ You need have no fears about the young rascal, Midget ; he loves you like a poor fool, as any man is, to care so much about a woman.”

“ I am happy to agree with you, papa ; these are not the times for love-making.”

“ Pshaw, girl ! Love's time is all time. Are you turning Methodist and rebel both ? ”

“ I was thinking then, dear papa, of what I heard Mr. Montagnie once say—”

“ What the deuce are you having that impertinent young rebel in your thoughts for ? ”

“ Why, papa, what a question ! You know you always say we women never have a reason for anything.”

“ No more have you. What said the rebel ? ”

“ Not much ; but, it being in your own vein, I remembered it.”

“ What was it ? ”

“ He said, ‘ a man must be not only base, but a fool, to heed a woman when his country was at stake.’ ”

“ In my vein, you think ! about as cold-blooded, puppyish a speech as ever I heard.”

An arch smile danced over the face of Katrina, and she answered, “ We women are such poor judges, papa.”

“ That you are ; and yet men of sense, whose single heads would hold all the brains of a regiment of women, are converted into fools and spooneys by you ; you are downright deluders and deceivers.”

“ And yet mamma seems a very nice woman ”—this with a roguish smile.

“ Don’t speak of your mother, Midget. She is a different person ; worthy to be a man instead of a sensible woman.”

“ Papa thought her sensible when she said ‘ yes ! ’ ”

“ That I did ! Not but that there were enough others after her. Every one of them something in position to make a woman proud ; but whist ! you jade ; you’ve got a mocking tongue in your head ! ”

As he said this he dismounted, and with courtly elegance assisted his daughter to do the same, for they had by this time reached their own door.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SIMPLETON'S NEWS.

“There are some happy moments in this lone
And desolate world of ours, that will repay
The toil of suffering through it, and atone
For many a long, dark night, and weary day.”—HALLECK.

TWENTY-FOUR hours elapsed and no intelligence of the whereabouts of the patriot troops had transpired. Newburgh was fairly down in the mouth; no excitement, no gossip, no roll of drum nor scream of fife. The farmers “drove their teams afield,” and the women baked and churned, knit and giggled, talked or scolded, as in ordinary times.

Katrina De Witt was seized with an irresistible desire to chat with her friend and companion Blanche Montagnie, who had been less neighbourly since the advent of the young English officer, and seemed in every way more distant and reserved. Katrina remembered this all of a sudden, and bethought her of some excuse for a morning call, though why excuse were needed to do a thing so natural and common must be referred to some internal consciousness, rather than to any external necessity.

Accordingly, she procured a delicate basket, lined with flannel, and placed therein several half-grown white bantams, so diminutive in size that they resembled pretty birds rather than barndoors fowl. Armed with her little gift, the fair girl, with trim bodice and silken skirt looped at the side, made her way to “The Cedars,” for thus was called the Montagnie mansion.

Blanche was seated at an embroidery frame near the window, busy in adjusting the shades of floss and silken skein, one small foot just visible upon a cushion, and her

head bent over her work. The day was one of those lovely days of October which June can hardly rival in balmy sweetness. The lattice opened to the floor, leaving the rich carpet and high-backed chairs in full view from the honeysuckled columns of the piazza, or "stoop," as it was called in that day, while within a huge crackling hickory fire blazed behind hand-irons burnished with almost golden splendour. A beautiful boy was studying by a low table, and nearly in the centre of the room, in her high-backed velvet chair, sat Madame Montagnie, reading one of those old ponderous black-letter tomes common at the period of our story in all families of any pretension, but now only to be found on the shelves of the antiquary. She was clad in folds of heavy black silk, which swept upon the carpet, and a plain widow's cap surmounted her still smooth and exquisitely outlined forehead.

It was a fair picture of lights and shades which the eye of Miss De Witt took in at a glance; too quiet, too sombre, in some of its parts, but these her bright girlish heart rejected, and she entered the room with a pretty swing and toss, and the two girls were at once in each other's arms. Madame Montagnie extended her hand courteously, but, if the truth must be told, she did not half like the easy coquetry of Katrina, and her welcome was more stately than hearty. Nothing daunted, the little beauty went to the side of the lady and gently kissed her smooth cheek, and said also, with perfect naiveté,

"Ah, Madame, you do not much like naughty frivolous Katrina, but time will work wonders for her. I am longing so to get old and staid."

"Never long for age, my dear," rejoined the lady,

drawing the fair head down, and kissing amid the clustering curls of her brow, for Katrina could disarm the severest observer with her half infantile candour.

Then Miss De Witt began to tell of the departure of Colonel Vinton, eyeing her friend Blanche sharply as she did so, and rather elaborating her praises as she saw how the blushes deepened in her cheek, and her head was bent more closely to her embroidery frame.

Suddenly there was a clatter of horses' feet, which caused both ladies to look from the lattice, and Katrina exclaimed,

"The redoubtable Don Quixote, and his good Rosinante, as I live."

"It is Jamie; I wonder if he saw Wendell."

At this Katrina blushed, and was intent over the basket of silks, while the youth was ushered in.

Jamie was one of those unfortunates not unfrequent in all communities, who, though not absolutely idiotic, are deficient in that equable adjustment of the faculties essential to the full understanding of the exigencies of society; who fail to see the relation and dependence of facts and events upon each other, and are therefore incapable of forecast or self-reliant action.

He was ushered, very unwillingly, into the presence of the stately dame, halting and lingering at the threshold, where he stood, twirling his brimless hat, his two feet turned in and his knees bent, the very picture of misery.

"Did you see Mr. Wendell?" asked the lady, in a kindly tone.

"He sent me back, he did. He wouldn't let me go. They'll kill him, they will—I know it, I feel it," and he blubbered aloud.

"Oh no, Jamie ; he'll soon be back again."

"He ain't gone to Morristown. He won't go to New York. They'll go to Yorktown to be killed, all on 'em. I sneaked under the table and heard General Washington tell the whole story," and he laughed at the revelation.

The dame arose from her chair in some trepidation. Blanche whispered, softly,

"Dear mamma, do not let Jamie communicate this elsewhere, and the secret is safe."

Whereat Katrina whispered,

"Clear head and true heart," and the girls joined hands in pretty girl wise.

Thus was this most important military secret in the keeping of three fair ladies, at a time when silence was so all-essential, and women supposed to be incapable of keeping one.

C H A P T E R X I I I .

HOME AGAIN.

FOR several days after the advent of poor Jamie at the Cedars, his movements became so mysterious, and his language so incoherent, as to at length attract the attention of the family. A small horse, which he claimed as his especial property, was in such constant requisition that the poor creature was sensibly much the worse for hard travel and indifferent usage. The boy would stand rubbing his hands and plunged into thought quite beyond his capacity to bear, and then, suddenly mounting his pony, start for the woods, as if life depended upon speed. Question him ever so much, no information could be obtained ; he shook his head, smiled, rubbed his hands, and then started full run for the stables : there he bridled

his horse and cantered away. Beyond the fact that certain viands disappeared, and that Jamie slyly milked a cow at all unseasonable hours, nothing definite was known. It came to be understood that he had made a pet of a bear, or some other wild animal, which he concealed, lest it should be taken from him, and so he was left unmolested to follow out his whim.

Thus a week passed, when one morning a strange pair were seen slowly walking through the village ; one, Jamie, shambling along, his tall body lopped over one side, the better to aid his companion, and his face screwed into every conceivable expression of anxious kindness and commiserating care. The very crown of his brimless hat was knocked in and drooping with pity, and every elf-lock of his poor head stuck itself out in exclamations of delighted wonder, grief, or commiseration. The compassionating soul of Jamie was in an ecstacy of sympathy, as was visible by the overflow of his eyes, which, not content with the sluiceway of cheek, descended the nose, and was every now and then wiped away by the cuff of his coat.

His companion was foot-sore and weak, as was evident from her slow, weary step. Her face was nearly hidden by a large shawl, but the portion visible was very pale and thin—a childlike, pretty face, upon which the storms had beaten and subdued to a strange look of heaviness and sorrow. It was Maggie, as the reader conceives.

“ If you could only get on Dolly’s back ! She’s just as easy as a cradle. You’d like Dolly, you would, she’s so easy.”

“ Thank you, Jamie ; we are almost to my aunt’s ; I like to walk better.”

Did you ask me just now about Black Dick? I was thinking about Dolly?"

"Yes, Jamie; I asked where you saw Richard."

"Oh! I saw him shoot the white woman, and Mr. Montagnie looked in this way at her, with her head in his lap, and he down in the mud," and Jamie stuck out his chin, lowered his eyes, and dropped his head in ludicrous imitation of another's grief.

Maggie groaned from the bottom of her heart, but said nothing. By this time they had reached the door of a small, low house, with a wooden paling in front, inclosing a strip of ground, in which some late, hardy autumnal flowers still flaunted a few blossoms, as if loth to resign their beautiful reign to the cold, barren domain of winter.

Jamie was fumbling at the little gate, which was not only latched, but tied also with a piece of rope to keep stray cattle out, when the door opened, and a little brisk woman, in check apron, and a starched blue and white gown, that looked as if the wearer never sat down in it, and the hair of her head, very little in quantity, so tightly drawn back and tied with a piece of eelskin that it looked as if she designed to pull every separate hair out by the roots unless they consented to lie in place—rushed out and untied the gate, exclaiming, at the same time,

"My goodness! gracious! sakes alive! If I a'nt dumbfounded! You, Maggie, here? With no bonnet to your head, and looking like a critter that's driv' from post to pillar! Did I ever!"

And she took the child in her arms and carried her into the house, smoothing her pale cheeks, kissing her, patting her shoulder, rocking the big chair in which she had placed her, all the time crying, "Did I ever! did I think ever to see my Maggie in this way?"

Then she stooped down and took off her shoes and stockings, and pinched the poor, pale feet in her hands, to see how bloodless they were ; and then she threw shoes and stocking out of the window, declaring they should “ never go on her dear feet again—no never ;” then she dropped her head, all at once, on Maggie’s lap, and burst into a fit of sobs and tears ; whereat Jamie rubbed his hands, and laughed, and cried, and ran excitedly out to take counsel, apparently, of his horse, Dolly.

And so, at last, the poor innocent found comfort, and Aunt Hetty—her dear Aunt Hetty, from whose protecting care Dick had won the child to share his wretched life —heard a part of Maggie’s story, not all, for there was much she would never tell, much she did not clearly understand ; she could see no evil in Black Dick, who had always some pretty gift for her, and always a kind word.

“ Yes, dear, darling, yes, Richard loves my pretty Maggie—yes, indeed—and all will come out right. Yes, indeed ; it’s a long lane that hasn’t any turn—it is always darkest before day, my dear. Don’t cry ; we’ll have Richard here, and we’ll bring things round all right.”

And she patted the shoulder, and soothed the little one till she dropped away to sleep, and while she slept, Aunt Hetty had such wondrous chicken-broth ready for her when she should awake, and jellies, and creams, and there was the stiffest of stiff gowns for her to put on—fresh linen, fragrant from the spring water and clean grass, and there was Jamie also, standing by the door holding the wonderful Dolly by the bridle, and claiming Maggie as a sort of property of his, because he found her in the woods. And so Maggie looked less pale and miserable, and was even more gentle and loving, because now she had no fear.

CHAPTER XIV

THE COMBAT OF THE PASS.

THE capture of Yorktown had been effected, and the surrender of the forces of Lord Cornwallis, by the aid of the French fleet, and the unexampled toil and courage of the little army of patriots. To this succeeded a period of comparative peace. The royal cause had received a shock so heavy that the war was pressed on their part with little spirit, while the vigilance of Washington was unceasing.

Meanwhile the French fleet had been removed to the West Indies and Connecticut, and all active movements confined to the southern campaign, while the Jerseys, so often held by one or the other of the contending armies had become the theatre of the most obnoxious feature of the war. Frightful atrocities were perpetrated with impunity ; the Cowboys had become more than ever a terror to the inhabitants. The cruel fate of poor Dora had been reported to Washington, whose head-quarters were once more at the village of Newburgh, and at length a detachment was sent to the Ramapo, not only to protect the people, but also to punish this lawless band of marauders.

The inaction of the armies had allowed Vinton to repeat his visit to the family of De Witt, he having been commissioned by Sir Henry to carry documents to the commander-in-chief in relation to an exchange of prisoners.

Blanche Montagnie and Katrina De Witt were fast friends during all these eventful months, reading, sewing, walking, and riding together ; they were quite inseparable.

Wendell, now Colonel Montagnie, was detained much about the person of the commander-in-chief, but it became obvious that when opportunities occurred for him to be at home, or to visit in the village, he rather shunned than sought the society of Katrina. He was courteous only, barely making those formal calls demanded by polite usages.

Colonel Vinton, on the contrary, lost no opportunity to encounter the smiles or frowns of the capricious beauty, who, it must be confessed, was more than ever hard to please, and so fitful in spirits that even the equable Blanche was grieved, and often distressed at her unreasonable moods.

Early in June the two girls resolved upon a long canter in the direction of the Cleave, to return before nightfall. They positively declined all escort, and, having failed to announce the direction they designed to take, it was naturally supposed they would ride their ordinary route, over the smooth military road.

As they descended the valley, now in friendly chat, and now putting their horses at high speed, as girls will—racing with laugh and jest—they heard frequent discharges of musketry, which they supposed to proceed from some military drill, unconscious of the detachment which had been sent out to break up the strongholds of the Cowboys at the Ramapo Pass.

At an angle in the Pass the Bald Eagle suddenly rose from a clump of cedars, and stayed their progress. He said, in a low voice,

“ Show yourselves, maidens, then back for your lives!”

Hardly conscious of the meaning of the speech, and undetermined what to do, the two girls rode on a few paces, when, directly across their path, commanding the whole

mountain defile, appeared a band of men, heavily armed, and led on by Black Dick himself. Panic-stricken they wheeled their horses and darted by the ambushed Indians at full speed, only to encounter a battalion of troops which had been sent out to reinforce the former detachment, and which had been unable to hold the Cowboys in check.

Loud yells from the rear increased their panic, for a glance showed them the dreadful foe in what seemed full pursuit.

“Hist, hist!” said a low voice.

The battalion, at a signal from Ramapaugh, remained immovable. A slight stir of the junipers and laurels, which created an almost impervious thicket, and Mequa appeared, beckoning the girls to follow her down the river-bank. Hastily dismounting, and throwing the bridles over the necks of the animals, they descended the steep, and found themselves upon a small plateau secure from danger.

“Hist!” whispered the young savage, with a suppressed laugh; “Black Dick has a serpent at his heels.”

Then arose the frightful clash of arms, and the screams, yells, and groans of contending men. The Cowboys and their allies, numbering a thousand men, had been suddenly attacked in the rear by the Ramapaugh Indians, who compelled them to fight, retreating steadily in the direction of the road occupied by fresh troops, and ambushed by the Bald Eagle. Bullets and arrows whizzed through the air. The crowd of men filled the defile; clouds of dust and smoke darkened the heavens. Onward came the battling host, fighting step by step, filling the air with groans and imprecations.

The deadly conflict turned the shoulder of the Cleave,

and up sprang the Bald Eagle with a wild Indian whoop, and out poured the shot from the fiery mouths of five hundred rifles.

The party in the rear, at the first whoop of their leader, fell flat to the ground, and dreadful was the carnage wrought upon the refugees and Cowboys. Some sprang down the bank and disappeared in the thick undergrowth; some sought to climb the almost horizontal rocks of the Cleave, but were cut down by their fierce assailants; others sought safety in flight, hard pressed by the murderous foe.

Mequa, eager to witness the prowess of her husband, crawled up the bank, and, with face close to the ground, watched the fight with delighted interest. More than once her limbs were grazed by the feet of the combatants, but this did not drive her away, or prevent her from giving expression to her pleasure.

Katrina likewise drew herself up the bank, despite the expostulations of the more timid Blanche.

“I must see what is going on, Blanche, or I shall die of terror, the sounds are so horrible.”

Blanche covered her ears with her hands, and buried her face in her lap. While thus seated, trembling and aghast, a cloak was drawn tightly over her head, and two strong arms lifted her from the ground and bore her forcibly down to the river’s brink, and soon the dash of oars through the water told her that all hope of rescue was gone.

The dreadful conflict closed with the capture of Black Dick, who, with arms closely pinioned, was driven before the troops, he and his men receiving many a hard prick from the bayonets of the captors.

They soon encountered the two young colonels, Mon-

tagnie and Vinton, with Mr. De Witt, for the news of the contest had spread, and the return of the horses riderless had carried dismay to more than one heart. Galloping up to the Bald Eagle, wild and eager inquiries passed from mouth to mouth, which were answered by the appearance of Katrina and Mequa, consternation depicted in every form of face and attitude.

“My sister! my sister!” exclaimed Montagnie.

The Bald Eagle darted down the bank, unmoored his canoe, divining at once the nature of the disappearance of the maiden, and with heavy strokes descended the stream. The capture had been so recent that the chief soon discovered the object of his pursuit descending the stream, clinging so closely to the bank that the boat was nearly lost amidst its shadows; but nothing could resist the impetuosity of the strong arm of the Bald Eagle, whose canoe cut the waters with the speed of the race-horse.

“Hold, or thy days are numbered,” he shouted, nearing the boat.

The wretch lifted a knife over the head of Blanche.

“One stroke more, and I bury this in her breast.”

Ramapaugh folded his arms; it was Robert, the younger brother of Dick, who controlled the fate of Blanche.

“What is the will of the white man?” demanded the chief.

“I hold this girl as a hostage for my brother.”

“Release her, and I will release the Black Panther.”

“Washington will not yield him up; a price is upon his head, and death only before him. He shall not die unavenged while there is a drop of blood in my veins.”

"The maiden has not harmed the Black Panther; why slay the wood pigeon to avenge the blood of the wolf?"

"I tell you, Ramapaugh, when Dick dies blood shall be shed which will be felt, and it is hers," pointing downward.

"Give me the maiden, and I promise you the Bald Eagle will free the Black Panther, if at the tree of death. If he dies he shall die as becomes a man."

"You promise to free, at all hazards, the Black Panther," repeated the youth eagerly.

"I promise, on the honour of a chief, in the eyes of the Great Spirit," replied the other solemnly.

"Take her, Ramapaugh; it is enough," he answered.

During all this time Blanche lay in the bottom of the boat, silent, pale as marble, and every instant expecting death. She was now lifted gently into the canoe by the friendly chief, who struck out into the stream and made his way to Newburgh.

C H A P T E R X V.

THE LOVE CURE.

HORSES had been brought, and Katrina once more mounted on her homeward way, very naturally expecting her father to accompany her, and Colonel Vinton to aid in the search for the lost Blanche, but in this she was at once undeceived, for the fiery old gentleman consigned her, for reasons of his own, to the care of his friend, and remained to aid young Montagnie.

Katrina had any amount of spirits on ordinary occasions, but on this she was seriously worried for her friend. She had been greatly shocked at the incidents of the

morning. She was all out of sorts, distressed, and what is worse, cross. She rode on for some time in silence, and then she broke out into lamentations for her friend in this wise :

“To think I should crawl up the bank to see how men look when they transform themselves into demons and monsters, and leave the darling under the bank alone, and half dead with fright ! I deserve to be torn in pieces for it ! No, Colonel Vinton, if you try to excuse it I shall hate you worse than I hate myself. I always was selfish and giddy, and a monster of wickedness, but I never supposed I should come to this.”

Katrina fairly broke down, and gave way to a passionate burst of tears.

Nothing would seem to be more natural than that her companion should say something to console her, and he did make the attempt in a poor, awkward way, which instantly roused the spirit of the young girl.

“Wait till I wipe my tears, Colonel Vinton ; I have something to say to you.”

Now this was very much as if a shrewish woman should say to a bad boy (she was very busy for the time being), “I know you are itching for a whipping ; wait a moment, my lad, and I'll indulge you !” And it was so construed by the gallant Colonel, for he burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

“To think that anybody can laugh and poor Blanche not found !” she exclaimed, with a pout.

“She will be found ; there is no absolute danger, Miss De Witt, for she was on friendly ground. What were you going to say to the bad boy, Miss De Witt ?”

Katrina laughed, and said, with some embarrassment, “To begin, Colonel ; men are such spooneys,” and she

laughed and coloured a good deal in saying this. "I think that really is the word, Colonel; I mean they are so very apt to think they like a woman who is in no ways adapted to them; they mistake a sort of admiration for something more serious, and—so—make fools of themselves."

She finished the sentence with a rush, whereat Colonel Vinton laughed again, and said he thought men were rather apt to understand themselves; at which she answered, "Not a bit of it! I think I could give a rule which would help them greatly, only they are so conceited that they will not learn nor take advice."

"I am not one of that kind, Miss De Witt. I am all submission and readiness to learn."

"Please wait till I arrange my ideas. This is it; when a man finds himself most a man in the society of a woman—most brave, most aspiring, his best thought at command, and his best selfhood spontaneously active—then he proves that he truly loves that woman."

Colonel Vinton drew his rein nearer to his companion.

"Upon my word, Miss De Witt, Minerva herself could not have more wisely spoken."

"Of course not, Colonel. Now in my society you are not half so—so—interesting as you are in the society of a lovely friend of mine; you lose your pride, your tongue, and I must say you are not engaging—there!"

Colonel Vinton did flinch a little at this home-thrust, and he coloured a good deal. He tried to speak, but she tapped her horse and rode on, and, turning her head over her shoulder, said,

"Colonel, those pretty escapades of that tongue of yours were capital, only they mistook the ears that should have heard them."

It was wonderful to see the change in this brave soldier ; he carried his head higher, sat more firmly upon his horse, smiled a more manly smile, and galloping to the side of the girl, extended his hand.

“ Miss De Witt—Katrina—we can be friends ? ”

“ The best and dearest,” and they were never more companionable than at this instant of clear understanding.

At this moment Wendell Montagnie passed them, and lifted his hat coldly, as he spurred up the opposite road without speaking. If the truth is to be spoken, his thoughts were less with poor lost Blanche than with Katrina ; they were fierce, angry thoughts.

Katrina reddened and bit her lip, and then said to Colonel Vinton,

“ Do you know, Colonel Vinton, I think Ramapaugh, the Bald Eagle, has a model wife ; hence I infer he is a model husband.”

“ I can hardly understand on what you base your opinion.”

“ You shall understand. Mequa took Blanche and me down the bank at a sort of double-quick step, and then she crawled back to see her husband use his battle-axe.” I heard her laugh, and I could not resist the contagion.”

“ I can hardly credit you, Miss De Witt,” he answered, shuddering.

“ I am sure you cannot ; it is true, nevertheless, and the cause of the loss of dear Blanche, who trembled in a way to do a man’s heart good. I remorselessly left her, and crept up in the wake of Mequa. Colonel Vinton, I have read Homer. I saw young Achilles to the life, fiery as a thunderbolt, ubiquitous as a demigod. I did not wonder that his wife shouted, and lost sight of the carnage in view of this incarnated *Mare*.”

I think Vinton by this time had so basely deserted his colours, that he began to absolutely dislike our excitable and imaginative Kate. She saw it and rejoiced in her true heart.

“If I had a soldier for a husband I would go and see him fight,” she continued.

“God forbid!” ejaculated Colonel Vinton, gravely.

“I do not say Amen to that. They say in battle General Washington is like a volcano bursting to flame. These calm men are terrible when roused to action.”

They were long on the way, but finally reached the house, and Katrina was folded in her mother’s arms, while De Witt, in his high-heeled, buckled shoes made a perfect storm of clatter, as he hurried across the piazza rubbing his hands, and telling how the Bald Eagle had brought Blanche home—“Poor thing! as white as a sheet and as limp as a rag.”

And we must own that Colonel Vinton took his lesson so kindly that he deserted Katrina at the threshold of her home, and not long after might have been seen bending over the sofa on which the fair Blanche reclined, with the greatest apparent solicitude.

C H A P T E R X V I

A LAUGH.

KATRINA, with her usual candour and impetuosity, had brought Colonel Vinton to a better understanding of herself and of his own true feelings, but she had opened up a new and alarming series of misunderstandings and difficulties, which she had hardly foreseen. Not many days elapsed before Mr. De Witt became fully aware of what he considered the defection of Colonel Vinton, and his

hot blood took the alarm. He eyed his daughter sharply; he more than once bent angry brows upon the Colonel.

Montagnie, also, from his standpoint, regarded the English officer with distrust not unmixed with contempt, as one of the sect, half puppy and half monkey, known as a male flirt.

Blanche was the only one of the group who seemed at all content. She grew radiantly beautiful under the sunshine of awakened love and happiness.

Katrina, on the contrary, was dispirited and unhappy. Montagnie had dropped all intercourse with the family while Colonel Vinton remained a guest, and as the devotion of the latter was laid upon a new shrine, Mr. De Witt naturally concluded the last circumstance associated with the changed manner and spirits of his daughter. This surmise was strongly confirmed when he came upon her suddenly one day intent upon a book, which she held upside-down.

“Jilted, by George!” exclaimed the irritable old gentleman.

“Who is jilted, dear papa?”—this languidly, and turning her book to a more readable position.

“You, Katrina De Witt?”

“I, dear papa!—and by whom?”

“By whom?”—very mockingly.

Katrina arose and put her hand upon his shoulder.

“Dear papa, I do not know what you mean. I never saw the man who has had the privilege of jilting your daughter, if that is what you mean.”

“I'll call him out, old' as I am. I'll punish the puppy, if there is powder in the land to do it.”

“Who, *nano*?”

"Who? That scoundrel—that viper, Vinton."

Katrina breathed more freely, and this time she patted her father's cheek, and laughed merrily.

"To think of my portly papa being shot at! Why, he could hit you ten times to your hitting him once!"

"I don't care a fig for that. He shan't desert a daughter of mine for nothing."

"Desert me? I should laugh to see a man go if I wanted to keep him!" and she tossed her golden curls in high pride, and flashed her eyes upon him.

"Midget, you are a trial. I knew how it would be the moment you were born. I wanted a boy, not a lovesick, sniveling girl," and he thrust both his hands into the pockets of his ample velvet skirts, with an air of a much injured man.

"I am sorry for you, dear papa; but I have not sniveled much, have I?"

And in proof to the contrary she burst into a fit of tears.

Mr. De Witt was seriously distressed. He laid her pretty head upon his broad shoulder and tried to soothe her, and to discover the secret of her tears.

"Come, now, Midget; can't you tell me what's the matter? I'll call your mother—you'll tell her."

"No, no, papa; I've nothing to tell. No, I would rather tell you than mamma. There, I am done! Tell anybody but papa! No, indeed. I am your Miranda and you my Prospero. Oh! if I only had a Ferdinand!"

And she resumed her gaiety, though her long lashes glistened with tears.

"Midget," resumed her father, in a low voice, and very solemnly, "I had taken such a liking to the Colonel; he's a capital shot, and the best hand at cards I ever played

with ; from a good family, too ; a gentleman to the back-bone. He loved you, girl, and I don't see, for my life, what's the matter !”

“ Poor papa ! I am sorry for him ! But, papa, the Bald Eagle, or any tyrannical, fiery Hotspur, is better adapted to me than this model gentleman. Oh ! I should be so tired of him !”

“ And so you made him face about ? Upon my word he took it mighty easy !”

“ I just showed him what a mistake he was making, and what a cruel, vixenish, cold-blooded, battle-delighting monster I am !”

“ Frightened him off, you jade, you ?”

And Mr. De Witt shook his portly sides with an internal laugh.

He certainly entertained a very much abated respect for Colonel Vinton after this, for, his theory being that every woman was to be carried by a sort of coup de main, he had not much studied the differences that may exist in different women, and that his daughter was quite as positive in character as himself.

C H A P T E R X V I I

IT IS WELL !

BLACK DICK—so celebrated for his prowess, so ferocious in his revenge, so careless of life—was an object of too much general interest to pass from the arena of this world without observation. Accordingly, when it was rumoured that the day had come which was to witness his execution, all the roads to the village of Newburgh were thronged with an eager and vindictive crowd.

Groups of the Ramapo tribe stalked along in their

gayly-ornamented blankets, worn with the grace and dignity of a Roman toga. Disguised Cowboys skulked onward in moody silence. Farmers who had been robbed, householders whose dwellings had been fired, women whose injuries were nameless, created an ominous crowd, whose fierce and sullen threats told plainly that, if justice were to be delayed or evaded, there were those who would summarily participate in its execution.

Even Jamie caught the infection of excitement, and mounting Dolly, scoured about amidst the crowd, enjoying all, as if it had been a gala-day. At length he hastened to inform Maggie of the great doings in the village.

Aunt Hetty, only distressed, had not thought of this contingency. She left Maggie reading again and again the tender, merciful words of the good Saviour, while she, in a little back porch, amused herself, and diverted her mind over the washing-board—creating a perfect tornada of suds and thunders of rubbing, so that the din of the gathering multitude was drowned by the tumult of the wash-tub.

Jamie, having found the gate tied with a triple instalment of line, and all the shutters closed, straddled his long legs over the fence, and entered Maggie's room. He tried to seat himself that she might read to him, but he was so restless that she laid down the book to inquire where he was going.

“Come and see the sight! Guns and drums and wild Indians, and men and women, and horses and cows, and boys and girls—it's grand!”

And he lifted one foot and kicked some imaginary object in the air, and gave out a sharp whistle.

“What is it all about, Jamie?”

“All about Black Dick. They've got him—they have.”

You're glad now, ain't you—glad I come and told you?" he asked in an altered tone, seeing Maggie fall back in her chair, pale as death.

Silently she arose from her chair, with a strength she had not known for many a day, untied the gate, and, laying her hand upon the neck of Dolly, which Jamie guided with slow, solemn care, she followed in the wake of the multitude.

The day was calm and lovely, and a looker-on would have supposed the people were out to enjoy a holiday, rather than to witness the horrible extremity of the law inflicted upon a fellow-creature.

The usual routine had been observed, and the chaplain had knelt in prayer, when the Bald Eagle was observed to disengage himself from a group of his people, among whom was Mequa, and approach the side of Black Dick, where he stood with folded arms. The effect was imposing and picturesque, but only the disguised Cowboys understood the purport of the movement.

The prayer was finished; a silence fell upon the vast multitude.

Sudden as a flash of lightning from the smoky thunder-cloud, the Bald Eagle sprung forward, and, with a stroke of his tomahawk, severed the bonds that confined the prisoner.

"Run, Dick, run!" shouted the Cowboys; and away he sped with the swiftness of the wind; but the Bald Eagle was swift as the wild deer, and soon confronted him.

"That for the White Doe!" he shouted, and the tomahawk cleft bone and brain. Black Dick reeled wildly, and fell headlong to the earth. As he fell a scream from the lips of Maggie rent the air, as, rushing forward like a spirit, she threw herself upon the body.

“Richard, my poor Richard!—look here is little Dicky come back.”

The man opened his eyes, closed them again, and was gone!

Then arose yell and shout. The Cowboys, forgetful of their own danger, fired shot after shot at the Indian hero, who stood immovable, with his arms folded, gathering his mantle about him. His eyes bent upon the lifeless form beneath him—a fitting impersonation of Zeus when he had just hurled the fiery thunderbolt.

Shot after shot rattled along the steep. The military, paralyzed at first, gave the alarm; the multitude swayed hither and thither as the great forest reels under the blows of the winter wind.

Then fell a hush once more. The crowd opened right and left, and the commander-in-chief, with his aides, rode slowly up the steep. Approaching the chief, still motionless as a statue of stone, Washington pointed to the body,

“Was it well, Ramapaugh?”

“It was well, my father. The Bald Eagle promised freedom to the Black Panther.”

“He was not yours; he was my condemned man. Ramapaugh,” and he flashed an angry eye upon the chief.

“He is dead, my father; what does it matter?”

At the word of command the troops fell into line and retired to their tents. The multitude slowly passed before the body, cold in death, with the stricken wife bent over the wounded head. Women, relenting, now crowded around and filled the air with their sobs and tears; but Jamie pushed them all aside and raised the form of Maggie from the ground. Seeing her sweet, smiling lips and closed eyes, he lifted up his voice and wept audibly. Maggie was dead!

Silently and mournfully some of the few friends of the Cowboys aided the unhappy Robert in conveying the bodies to the gloomy threshold of the old woman, who had lived to see such a fearful wreck of her guilty household.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHECKMATED.

WENDELL MONTAGNIE had been long ill at ease. While the urgency of the service demanded of him his best thought and action he was comparatively content, sacrificing his own feelings, of whatever kind, to the public good ; but, now that inaction prevailed, the pangs of the lover returned, and he would have sought a reconciliation with the haughty girl, but this she did not permit. A graceful salute, a gay laugh, a witty repartee, were the ultimate of his success, all of which left him tortured by jealousy and suspense.

The period of which we are treating was one not only of great and momentous public interest, but of a high moral sense and commanding intellect. The waltz had been introduced by the German officers, but was by no means popular, while the stately minuet was a general favourite, affording, as it did, expression to high-bred courtesies, and showing off a fine person and graceful manner to great advantage. Other amusements, also, partook of a certain gravity, amongst which the kingly game of chess stood pre-eminent.

There was a cheerful group of American officers at the house of De Witt, in which Colonel Montagnie had succeeded in procuring the companionship of Katrina at this last-named beautiful game, and in which she was

evidently having the best. She leaned back carelessly, saying, "Check à la Reine."

Montagnie brought a knight into position, saying, at the same time,

"Yes, my queen checks, but is impervious to attack."

Katrina reddened.

"Colonel Montagnie's game is one of defence, it can hardly be called an attack."

"Queens are for the obedience or adoration of their subjects."

And his voice trembled with emotion.

"You forget the queen of chess is the most intrepid piece upon the board. Check *v. mate*."

As she said this, she confronted the king by playin, the queen in position.

As Montagnie arranged the pieces, he said, with dee, feeling,

"Must the devotion of ten long years be forgotten ? b of no avail ?"

Katrina turned pale, moved her shoulder uneasily, bu recovering herself, replied,

"Ten years, Colonel ? I, at least, was at that time i pinafors ; hardly out of bib and tucker."

"Most true ; and have you forgotten the boy who be came almost your shadow ?"

"I have a faint recollection of a boy who half choke another for putting the hair out of the eyes of a littl girl."

Montagnie's face glowed with delight, and his fine eye beamed so passionately upon the face of his com panion that she lowered her dark orbs and coloured to her temples.

"I remember, also, a boy who defrauded the same littl

girl of a fine apple, which she was just at the point of biting, by snatching it out of her hands and throwing it over the wall."

"The young monster! What instigated him to such an enormity?"

"The apple had been presented her by a lovely gentle boy—the very reverse of the other."

"Did the wretch make her no reparation?"

"He gave her another, a bigger, redder apple."

All this was said with perfect gravity.

"Did she take—did she take the apple?"

"Oh, yes, but she flung it at his head, and ran and kissed the gentle little boy."

"And she never kissed her champion—never?"

Katrina reddened.

"Certainly, never. It is your move, I think. You were about to castle."

"No, by Jove! I'll fight it out on the open plain— nail my colours to the citadel, and die in their defence."

This might be a little bombastic, but never had the youth looked half so handsome in the eyes of Katrina—never had she flashed upon him such a look from her glorious eyes as now met his, to which he whispered, softly,

"Can we not be friends, Miss De Witt?"

"We always quarrelled—we quarrel to this day." This, lifting her brows with a demure, yet saucy smile.

"I am not quarrelsome—I am one of the meekest of men living." This with real irritation; whereat Katrina gave one of her low, merry laughs, which is so delicious to hear, and replied,

"I, too, Colonel Montagnie, am a perfect Griselda, the meekest of the meek."

Had any one been able to look into the chamber of Katrina that night they would have seen her weeping profusely, and yet not with a look of suffering ; her veins tingled and her cheek flushed, and exclamations escaped her lips more than once declaring herself to be the " very worst, most perverse and ill-behaved girl that ever lived ; there is something right down cruel and bad about me, for I enjoy this tormenting of poor Wendell," and then she coloured all over at the name.

" I can understand how boys like to fight a hornet's nest, and how they think it fun to turn a toad on its back, and hold a turtle just out of the water. Blanche says it is dreadful, and so it is. Her lover wouldn't stand it, but mine must, or he's no lover of mine."

At this she gave her curls a most emphatic pull, and seated herself at the toilet glass, to take, as women will, a sort of inventory of their charms before going to bed. She had an indifferent share of vanity, as engaging women must have, but she was, withal, a conscientious, right-intending girl, and when she had sufficiently composed herself, she knelt down to her nightly prayer, and soon was asleep.

C H A P T E R X I X

IT IS DONE.

OUR little drama is drawing to a close. The subsequent year saw the nationality of our Republic acknowledged by Great Britain, and here at New York, where Washington had so often made his head-quarters, was the wasted army of patriots disbanded.

Before hostilities had ceased, the pliant Blanche joined her hand to that of Colonel Vinton, and departed with

him to New York, whence she wrote to her friend Katrina glowing descriptions of the festivities of the gay society in which she was an acknowledged belle.

Katrina refused to give her hand to Montagnie while there was any possibility of continuance of war. "We can postpone our happiness while the poor soldier sleeps under arms," she would say ; and further, when strongly urged, she would add,

"Truth to speak, Wendell, there should be absolute peace in the country before you are called upon to face hostilities at the fireside."

She would look so saucily imperious in uttering these intimations, that Colonel Montagnie grew every day more deeply infatuated.

At length the cities of the new Republic were brilliant with illuminations ; the bells rung their thrice joyous clang, and the earth shook under the triumphant roar of artillery. Great Britain had acknowledged the independence of these United States, and the thirteen colonies were to become a grand nationality !

In the midst of these rejoicings, Katrina De Witt, who loveliness of person had won admiration, and whose loveliness of character had won all hearts, having laid aside her Tory proclivities, gave her hand to the one who had long possessed her heart, despite her wayward tormenting of it—to the Intercepted Messenger of Ramapo Pass.

The Bald Eagle must not be dismissed in silence. He, whose noble nature embraced the unadulterated virtues of the savage, such as unflinching courage, patient endurance, and stern integrity, coupled with the last humanities of the best civilization, lived to be the last of his tribe. His clear judgment did not fail to penetrate

the vast future, when the savage, having fulfilled his destiny, must give place to a people better able to develop the resources of the land they had discovered, and who were fast filling it with those arts and appliances of which the poor Indian was slow to learn the needs or the uses.

I have visited the old haunts of the tribe, and traced, step by step, the scenes of my story. My guide was an ancient man, whose memory extended back to the days of the "Great War," as he called the struggle for our Independence, and who pointed out to me the places historic in our annals, and made interesting as the last resting-place of the Bald Eagle.

For several years after the close of the War of Independence the remnants of the tribe of Ramapaugh returned to the valley for the purpose of burying their dead, and to celebrate also some of the ancient festivals of their people. Slowly they dwindled away, till one solitary man, bent with years, returned to lay his bones with his fathers. He was taciturn and lonely—avoided companionship, and supplied his simple wants by trapping and fishing.

Under a shoulder of the mountain, where the stream rested itself in the shadow of the forest and rock, he built his cabin—a stern old warrior, scarred in many a battle. But he was very gentle, though unwilling to talk, and shunning observation. Said my guide, "We called him old Ramapaugh, and sometimes the Bald Eagle. He was a perfect Jove in aspect. Do you see that rock there, rising up naked against the sky? I have seen old Ramapaugh seated there by the hour—his blanket folded around him, his eagle tuft waving in the air, and he as motionless and as sharply defined as the rock on which he sat."

"What a grand statue he must have made there against the sky!" I exclaimed, "the eagles wheeling above him, the river flowing beneath, and the old woods sweeping off in the distance. It was the genius of his people—silent, stern, gazing with an eye of rebuke upon the miserable interlopers who had robbed them of their heritage."

"Even so," returned my guide. "One day it was remarked there was no smoke from the hut of Ramapaugh—he had gone to hunt it was thought—the next day it was the same. He might not have returned—Ramapaugh did not like any intermeddling. But when the fourth day came, and there was still no smoke curling like a stream of incense through the trees, up the side of the rock, heavenward, we went in a body to learn what it should mean. The door of the cabin was closed; green branches were spread upon the floor—a pipe, inverted, was laid across the threshold—upon a pile of skins was stretched the body of the old warrior. His tomahawk was in one hand, his bow in the other, a quiver full of arrows at his side. His white locks were newly braided, and crowned with plumes of the war eagle, while his face was bravely painted; thus were the rites performed by himself, and thus had he gone out on that long journey, prepared to meet his people in the spirit-land."

As my guide finished his narrative he arose, and we both walked to a little inclosure, thickly grown with the wild raspberry and blackberry, looking like a small, lonely island in a sea of wheat, for the inclosure was in the midst of a cultivated field.

"Here," said he, as we leaned over the rude wall, "here are the ashes of the tribe, and in the midst we laid the body of Ramapaugh, just as he had prepared himself for burial."

We gazed a while in silence upon the resting-place of the tribe. Indeed the pretty cemetery looked to me like a beautiful funeral urn, in which was held the ashes of a nation. *Sic transit.*

“Here,” he continued, “are the remains of a rampart; tall trees have sprung from the soil, and lean their great limbs against the rock. You can easily trace its position, however, and can see that whoever commanded this pass would hold the key to the whole valley. Sit down here, and I will tell you the story of the Intercepted Dispatches, just as I heard the story from the bearer of the same—from the lips of Montagnie himself.”

Thus we sat that mild autumnal day; there he told me the story I have related, and thus have we striven to rescue one point in our history from the fast-gathering waters of oblivion.

THE END.

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